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A Novel,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. MEEKE,

AUTHOR OF

COUNT ST. BLANCARD.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE, AT THE

Minerva-Press,

LEADENHALL-STREET.

M.DCC.XCVII.

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CHAP. I.

IN the year 1776, a family of the name of Melac came to reside in Dunkirk, a well-known trading town in French Flanders, the head of which had spent the prime of his life in Gaudaloupe, where he had acquired a very handsome fortune in trade

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI

trade, and was now come to enjoy the fruits of his induſtry in his native country. The excellent character he bore in the iſland had ſtrongly recommended him to the notice of the then governor, who had entruſted him with ſome diſpatches of importance to deliver to the miniſter upon his arrival at Paris, whither he bent his ſteps as ſoon as he landed; and, during ſeveral interviews he had with the Comptroller-general, upon the ſubject of the letters he had brought over, he roſe ſo much in that gentleman's eſteem, and ſeemed ſo competent a judge of the French finances, that he offered him ſeveral places in his gift; wiſhing, as he told him, to make his talents uſeful to the community in general.

So flattering an idea made a forcible impreſſion upon the generous mind of Mr. de Melac, who, having for many years been accuſtomed to a very active line of life, already began to find his time hang heavy upon his hands; he therefore, without heſi-

tation, accepted the place of Receiver-general of Dunkirk, for which place he immediately ſet out with his family.

His wife had been dead ſome years, and had left him one ſon and two daughters.—A lady,* whoſe rare accompliſhments were her leaſt merit, had returned with him from Gaudaloupe. She had, ſince the death of his wife, acted in the double capacity of governeſs to his daughters, and ſuperintendant of his family, and was ſtill inveſted with the ſame powers. Mr. de Melac took up his abode in a large houſe annexed to his place, ſettled it upon liberal terms, and placed all his ſervants under the direction of Madame de Franval, of whom he entertained the higheſt opinion, and of whom his daughters were remarkably fond.

They continued their ſtudies under her inſpection, and the firſt maſters the town afforded were engaged to inſtruct them in the

the various female accompliſhments Mr. de Melac thought neceſſary to complete their education.

Bazile, his ſon, was now in his nineteenth year. Naturally of a gay, nay even volatile diſpoſition, he found himſelf quite in his element during his father's reſidence at Paris, where each ſucceeding day had been paſſed in planning amuſements for the next, and he by no means reliſhed the idea of taking up his abode in a paltry provincial town, chiefly inhabited, as he had been given to underſtand, by merchants of various nations, and inferior traders; and, to add to his mortification, he was obliged to dedicate his mornings to his father's office; for, when once Mr. de Melac had ſignified his will, he expected to be obeyed.

This truly-worthy man, for ſuch he was in every ſenſe of the word, had ſeen with regret the bent of his ſon's inclinations; he had preſided over his education himſelf, and

and few men were more capable of forming the youthful mind. He had concluded his arduous taſk, nearly completed before they left Gaudaloupe; and therefore, for a few months preceding their departure, owing to the multiplicity of his affairs, he had allowed his ſon to ſtudy or not, as it beſt ſuited him; and, during their ſtay in Paris, he had been in a great meaſure obliged to purſue the ſame method: Bazile therefore looked upon himſelf as emancipated from the reſtraints of adoleſcence, and perfectly qualified to play his part in the world.

He therefore no longer conſulted his father about the employment of his time, the choice of his companions, or upon any one circumſtance; and Mr. de Melac ſaw with the utmoſt ſorrow, that ſix months reſidence in Paris would render wholly uſeleſs all the pains and expence he had beſtowed upon his education; he was therefore by no means ſorry ſo excellent an op-

 portunity

portunity offered to retire from the ſcenes of diſſipation Paris affords for the young and gay; beſides, the place he now held would enable him to oblige his ſon to devote at leaſt ſome hours in the day to buſineſs, as he thought, and with very great juſtice, that habitual idleneſs enervates the faculties, and too often paves the way for guilty pleaſures. He knew he could eaſily procure the reverſion of this place for his ſon, to whom he meant to reſign it as ſoon as he attained the years of diſcretion, as it would afford ſufficient employ without fatiguing him, and a ſufficient income to live very genteelly, independent of what he meant to do for him.

Bazile was not acquainted with the extent of his father's plan, nor, if he had, would he have been at all more reconciled to the alteration that had taken place in their manner of living.

When

When they left Guadaloupe, he fully expected his father had wholly given up all thoughts of bufinefs ; he knew his fortune was fufficient to fupport the elegant ftile they had lived in while at Paris, and he could not bear the avaricious plodding ideas which had, he prefumed, induced him, though fo little in want of fuch an increafe to his income, to accept of a place which ftill kept him among the clafs of *bourgeois*.*

Till now he had never thought Mr. de Melac deficient in proper pride, therefore could the lefs account for his behaviour.— When he firft learned his intentions, he ventured, for the firft time in his life, to remonftrate with him upon the fubject, and endeavoured by every perfuafive method to prevent him from accepting what he looked upon as fo mean an employment.

* *Citizens*; the term diftinguifhed Plebeians from Nobility.

Mr. de Melac, with that patience ever characteriſtic of a parent intereſted for the happineſs and welfare of his children, liſtened to all he had to ſay with the utmoſt attention, deſirous to diſcover how far his wiſhes coincided with his own.

Bazile, encouraged by the kind looks of his father, mentioned his various objections to his plan, and proceeded to adviſe him to purchaſe ſome poſt about the court, which would raiſe him above the claſs of plebeians; that, for his own part, he particularly wiſhed to enter the army, which afforded quite ſufficient employment in time of peace, and the means of immortalizing the name of every brave man in time of war.

When he ceaſed ſpeaking, Mr. de Melac ſaid very coolly, "Bought honours ſeldom render a man more reſpectable in the eyes of ſenſible people, Bazile; and I am not anxious to try the experiment. If we do

our

our duty, we may ennoble any ſtation, and any employment. That of Receiver-general is both honourable and lucrative, and now ſeldom beſtowed but upon men of known probity; my character therefore will not ſuffer from my accepting ſuch a poſt.

"Were I to agree to your wiſhes, and allow you to enter the army, I am perfectly ſenſible what would be the conſequence of my folly, and have little doubt, from the natural warmth of your temper, you would get yourſelf run through the body in the courſe of a month. Your birth does not entitle you to mix with the young French nobility who command our armies, therefore pray endeavour to content yourſelf with following my example; and, believe me, I ſhall be infinitely more flattered to find your name placed among the claſs of good men and honeſt citizens, than among thoſe of the greateſt heroes this country ever produced. —"*Chacun à ſon métier*"† is an old but excellent

† Every one to his calling.

cellent proverb, Bazile, which I beg you will bear in mind."

Thus the difcourfe dropped, and a few days afterwards the whole family fet out for Dunkirk, and Bazile was inftalled in his new employment. His only confolation was, his father, by way of encouragement, annexed a very handfome falary to his place, and conftituted him his head clerk,—a title he would very readily have difpenfed with, and which he changed into that of deputy.

Next to pleafure, drefs had been his greateft ftudy during his ftay in Paris; and, as he particularly wifhed to be diftinguifhed, he followed all the reigning fafhions with the moft fcrupulous exactnefs, and, after his arrival at Dunkirk, frequently had the fatisfaction of hearing himfelf remarked as the fmart Bourgeois,—the young Receiver-general,—the handfome Melac!

He

He was far from a bad figure, and his countenance was very animated, and particularly pleaſing when he was in a good humour. At firſt he was rather flattered, when he overheard any of theſe expreſſions, but he ſoon, like all other new comers, ceaſed to excite notice: he began to diſcover neither his elegant dreſs nor handſome figure procured him admittance among the Flemiſh nobility reſident either in or near Dunkirk; and, as the officers, belonging to the different regiments in garriſon, were never in any of his father's parties, he had no opportunity of courting their friendſhip; he was reduced to ſeek therefore for companions among the different merchants' ſons with whoſe fathers Mr. de Melac began to aſſociate.

This was the ſociety he had been accuſtomed to ſince his birth; but at Paris he had frequently been in company with people of the firſt diſtinction, who had treated his father as their equal, and him with the

utmoſt politeneſs ; to be therefore thus, once more, reduced to a level with people who had their fortune to make, through his father's abſurd wiſh to increaſe his income, provoked him exceſſively ; however, as there was no remedy but patience, and he reflected he ſhould not always be in leading ſtrings, he endeavoured to ſubmit to his preſent mortifications, and was half-reconciled to his ſituation by the reaſoning of ſome young Engliſhmen, whoſe fathers were eſtabliſhed in different branches of trade at Dunkirk, to whom he had been early introduced.

Theſe gentlemen had much to ſay in favour of their different lines of buſineſs, and all ſeriouſly aſſured Bazile they looked upon themſelves as infinitely ſuperior to the generality of the nobility of the town, whoſe pride made their known poverty more conſpicuous.

Erneſtine,

Erneſtine, his eldeſt ſiſter, was between ſixteen and ſeventeen, and was free from Bazile's ambitious notions. Her father's conduct was always her example, as ſhe was convinced from her late mother's and Madame de Franval's remarks, that his actions were always regulated by the ſtricteſt propriety.

Her diſpoſition was remarkably amiable, her temper uniformly good, and her manners cheerful and unaffected.—Mr. de M[illegible] ſaw with delight her growing virtues, and ſincerely wiſhed ſhe might captivate ſome worthy man, capable of appreciating her merit.

While Madame de Franval looked forward with regret to this natural period of their ſeparation, Clemence, the younger ſiſter, was juſt turned of fourteen, and poſſeſſed, to uſe a French expreſſion, all the *naiveté et l'heureuſe ſimplicité de ſon âge*; remarkably lively, and very clever, ſhe was her

her father's favourite, and could take much greater liberties with him than either Bazile or Erneſtine dare.

Her youth gave her a ſort of privilege, and ſhe often amuſed Madame de Franval and Erneſtine with Bazile's ambitious notions, as ſhe was in ſome meaſure his confidante, and often affected to give into his way of thinking, on purpoſe to have the pleaſure of laughing at his folly, and of mimicking his airs and geſtures, before her ſiſter and governeſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

SOON after their arrival in Flanders, Mr. de Melac, having ſettled all his private affairs, told Madam de Franval and his children he was going to pay their maternal grandmother a viſit, and meant, if poſſible to prevail on her to take up her abode near them.

She would certainly enjoy their ſociety, and they would thus have it in their power to contribute greatly to her happineſs.—

The

The young ladies perfectly agreed with their father, but Bazile thought it was a very abſurd notion, as he had learned that his grandfather, once a reſpectable merchant of Havre de Grace, had failed in buſineſs juſt before he died, and had left his widow in the greateſt poverty; indeed ſhe had, ſince this event, been wholly ſupported by her daughter.

Her age precluded her undertaking a ſea voyage to ſee her grandchildren, and ſhe now reſided in a convent near Rouen, which was the fitteſt place for her he thought; for what honour would her being thus unneceſſarily brought forward do either him or his ſiſters; and, as ſhe had nothing to leave behind her, he could not ſee the neceſſity of courting her favour.

He was prudent enough to keep theſe reflections to himſelf; merely upon his father's ſaying he hoped he would be particularly diligent and attentive in his office during

during his abſence, he inquired when he meant to return?

That would depend wholly upon circumſtances, Mr. de Melac ſaid, unwilling to ſatisfy his curioſity, or to allow him time to give way to his natural propenſity for diſſipation, by fancying himſelf ſecure.

In leſs than a fortnight he returned with Madame des Ormes, the lady in queſtion, whom he immediately introduced to his children in the kindeſt manner.

Bazile felt neither veneration for her grey locks, nor pity for her dependent ſituation. The ſimplicity of her dreſs and manners diſpleaſed him, and he could not feel any reſpect for a perſon who lived upon his father's bounty; yet few people had been more deſervedly loved in proſperity, or more generally pitied when in adverſity.— Madame des Ormes needed only to be known to be eſteemed. She had long had a very high opinion of Mr. de Melac, and his

his generous manners had induced her inſtantly to cloſe with what ſhe termed his benign and conſiderate propoſal. She wept over her three grandchildren, and called down bleſſings upon their heads,—diſcovered great likeneſſes between them and their father and mother, and concluded with a prayer for their future welfare.

Erneſtine and Clemence gave her a moſt cordial welcome, and Bazile, knowing his father's eyes were upon him, tried to follow their example; and, during three weeks that Madame des Ormes continued an inmate of his father's houſe, he forced himſelf to behave to her with ſome degree of politeneſs, and, in his father's preſence, with reſpect.

At the expiration of this time, this reſpectable amiable woman took poſſeſſion of a ſmall houſe which Mr. de Melac had fitted up for her in a pleaſant village within two miles of Dunkirk, where they all promiſed

mised to visit her often. Indeed, Ernestine and Clemence were very fond of her, and, as it was only a pleasant evening's walk, seldom let two days elapse without calling upon her, and were always attended either by their father, who treated the good lady with the utmost kindness, or Madame de Franval, who was no less polite.

Bazile was astonished at his sister's evident partiality for their grandmother, whom he looked upon as a disgrace to their family, and felt very angry with his father for bringing her to expose *her* poverty, he said, and the lowness of *their* origin to all their new friends.

In common with his sisters, he presumed his father was a man of family; indeed it was generally believed in Gaudaloupe some youthful folly had induced him to leave France, and settle in that island, as his manners were those of a man who had been early accustomed to the first society. His

figure

figure was particularly ſtriking, and his converſation and various accompliſhments had convinced all his acquaintance he muſt have received an excellent education. Of the latter no one was more convinced than Bazile, who had often regretted his father was ſo excellent a ſcholar himſelf, as it enabled him ſo much the eaſier to diſcover his deficiencies in any ſcience Mr. de Melac choſe he ſhould ſtudy; but thinking as he did, reſpecting his father's family, he wondered he had not thought proper to introduce him and his ſiſters to ſome of his relations, inſtead of bringing *la mere des Ormes*, as he uſually called his grandmother, from her obſcure retreat, where ſhe was certainly taken proper care of, and wanted for nothing.

Though he would have been among the firſt to have reprobated his father's ſquandering away his money upon an old woman, he wondered Mr. de Melac had not placed her houſhold upon a more reſpectable footing.

ing. To put her in a cottage, with a ſingle Flemiſh peaſant to wait upon her, was truly abſurd, he told his ſiſters.

Erneſtine adviſed him very ſeriouſly to ſet about a reform in his own manners, before he ventured to criticiſe his father's actions, who had been ſolely guided in this affair by the wiſhes of Madame des Ormes, and ſhe was neither ſo fond of ſhew or luxury as he ſeemed to be. She had now all the comforts of life, enjoyed the ſociety of her grandchildren, and repeatedly aſſured both them and Mr. de Melac, ſhe had never been happier in her life. Still Bazile was far from ſatisfied, when he reflected it would ſoon be generally known that *la mere des Ormes* was his grandmother, and for the preſent determined never to mention her name among his acquaintance.

Every Sunday Mr. de Melac's carriage went to fetch the good old lady to dine with them, and on that day he ſeldom received

ceived any other company. Clemence diverted the good lady by her arch drollery, and Erneftine amufed her by her lively converfation, while their love and refpect increafed for her every fucceeding vifit, as they foon difcovered the excellence of her principles and difpofition, and found her, though naturally of a ferious turn of mind, pious without the fmalleft tincture of bigotry.

Mr. de Melac's fociety was foon fought by men of every rank. Real merit, when not obfcured by poverty, is fure to be noticed; therefore, had it been his wifh, he could very foon have introduced Bazile to the firft company Dunkirk afforded; but this was by no means his aim. His fon's greateft failing was vanity, and he rather fought to lower his pride; he wifhed Bazile to fhine among his equals, but not to court the fickle favour of the great. Still he as ftrictly forbid his falling into the other extreme, as low companions were, and

even

even more likely to corrupt his mind and diſpoſition: and he knew him to be very open to flattery.

Bazile ſtill obeyed him, but no longer with either cheerfulneſs or alacrity; his ſubmiſſion to his will was become the reſult of fear. Mr. de Melac ſaw he had loſt ground in his affections ſince their arrival in France: ſtill, as he knew himſelf to be in the right, he ſtrictly perſevered in his plan, though he continued to allow his ſon every reaſonable indulgence, and treated him in every reſpect with the utmoſt confidence.

It had been his maxim to bind him (as Rouſſeau adviſes) in imperceptible chains. Bazile's fickle diſpoſition, and the natural inſtability of his mind, had occaſioned the failure of his plan. Still he wiſhed, if poſſible, to veil every act of paternal authority under the name of friendſhip; he therefore, and with good reaſon, attributed the reſtraint

ſtraint he impoſed upon him to his ſolicitude for his welfare.

Sundays Bazile had to himſelf, and on that day he took care to make himſelf remarked, wherever he went, by his ſhewy appearance. He always attended the Parade; but was obliged, much againſt his will and pride, in conformity to his father's ſtrict orders, to attend Madam de Franval and his ſiſters to high maſs at their pariſh-church; from thence, to make himſelf ſome amends, he generally went to the military maſs of one or other of the regiments, and the beſt band of muſic was ſure to attract his attention. Indeed the latter religious ceremony is particularly adapted for ſoldiers.

The chaplain of the regiment ſays his maſs at the altar, while the band plays a ſeries of lively airs, ſometimes marches,—and often catches and glees,—and, in leſs than twenty minutes, the whole is over.—

Still

Still, the churches ſet apart for this ſervice are generally more crouded than any of the others; as the officers are moſtly all men of rank, and never abſent themſelves from this part of their duty. The faſhionable people of the town they inhabit uſually prefer the military ſervice to any other; and it was preciſely among this ſet Bazile wiſhed to ſhine and diſplay his dreſs and figure to the greateſt advantage.

CHAP. III.

IT was now the beginning of July, and the weather was remarkably warm, when, one Sunday morning during breakfaſt, upon Clemence having remarked Bazile ſeemed to have been taking uncommon pains at his toilette, he drew himſelf up with an air of ſelf-approbation, and ſaid, "If you are very good, Clemence, perhaps I may take you with me this morning."

"How kind!" ſaid the laughing girl. "But, pray, who is to be my judge upon this important occaſion? and where are you going?"

"Upon the paradè. Half the town will be aſſembled there at ten, to ſee the regiment of cavalry that came in yeſterday."

"Oh!

"Oh! I dare ſay it will be a very fine ſight," ſaid Clemence;—"but had you aſked Madame de Franval and Erneſtine to have joined our party, I ſhould have been ſtill more flattered by this diſtinguiſhed proof of your politeneſs and condeſcenſion."

Mr. de Melac gave Clemence a ſmile of approbation; then ſaid, "If I knew any ladies who were going upon the parade, I might permit your ſiſters to accompany you, Bazile; but young women, who are ſo little known as they are, and who have no chance of meeting with any great reſpect from my rank in life, are very apt to be inſulted by the inferior officers,—while their ſuperiors would very juſtly, whether they knew you or not, think both them and you beneath their notice; your ſhewy dreſs will not inſpire men of real conſequence with either awe or reſpect. You know I have always adviſed you to conform in that particular to your ſtation in life: hitherto my remonſtrances have been of little avail; but believe me, men of ſenſe, of every rank, are

ſure to laugh at frivolous coxcombs;—therefore, let me entreat you would not take ſuch extraordinary pains to deſerve the appellation."

Bazile wiſhed his tongue had been tied before he had afforded his father ſuch an opportunity to moralize. He wiſhed to have defended his conduct; but fearful any reply would only prove the forerunner of a freſh lecture, he left the room in ſilence; and, at the accuſtomed hour, attended his ſiſters to church.

During their walk thither, they met ſeveral of the officers belonging to the newly-arrived regiment. Bazile was particularly ſtruck with their elegant uniform. They were huſſars, which dreſs, and their handſome caps, gave them a very martial appearance. He ſtopped his ſiſters ſeveral times to make the ſame remark; then aſked them if they did not think ſuch a dreſs would become him extremely.

Clemence

Clemence ſaid ſhe thought it would, with the addition of whiſkers and ſtilts,—as his countenance was at preſent too effeminate, and he was rather too ſhort to appear to great advantage as a huſſar.

Madame des Franval and Erneſtine laughed; and both ſeriouſly adviſed him, ſince he was ſo partial to regimentals, to get himſelf inrolled among the militia.

He could hardly liſten to the propoſal with common patience; but determined in his own mind to do all in his power to cultivate the acquaintance of theſe new comers, and to get admitted, if poſſible, into ſo reſpectable a corps. Hitherto three regiments of infantry had compoſed the garriſon of Dunkirk; and Bazile had particularly envied the dreſs of the different officers belonging to them; but theſe cavaliers pleaſed him infinitely more;—they ſtruck him as being little ſhort of demi-gods; and he was convinced they

were heroes. He was glad when maſs was over; as he was anxious to get rid of his ſiſters, that he might take his uſual ramble, and diſplay his elegant perſon upon the ramparts, and elſewhere.

Juſt as they reached their own door, he met a young man he diſtinguiſhed by the title of friend, who was one of his particular favourites,—though he was by no means a companion his father would have choſen for him;—indeed Bazile was ſo conſcious of this, that he never aſked Berenger to their houſe: ſtill, they uſually met once, and ſometimes twice, a day, at different places. Berenger was certainly as great, or rather more a fop than himſelf; but infinitely his inferior in every other reſpect: he was head clerk to one of the principal wine merchants in the town, and a complete adept in the art of flattering thoſe whoſe purſes were better ſupplied than his own;—indeed, his yearly ſtipend was all laid out in clothes. Bazile was happy to ſee him; and, underſtanding he

he was going upon the parade, and from thence to military maſs, he took his arm, and quitted his ſiſters, who were totally unacquainted with his companion. Berenger paid him ſome very acceptable compliments upon his dreſs and looks,—wondered Mr. de Melac did not place him in ſome line that would entitle him to wear a ſword—a diſtinction confined to the nobility and military in a provincial town, but worn indiſcriminately at Paris by all ranks. There, of courſe, few people of faſhion diſplay them, except when full dreſſed; but, in moſt other towns, thoſe that poſſeſs this privilege, ſport them from morning till night. Bazile ſighed at Berenger's remark, and then reverted to the huſſars he had been ſo ſtruck with. Berenger agreed with him in every reſpect, and they determined to go to their maſs.

When they reached the large ſquare, where the troops were always exerciſed, they were informed, to their no ſmall diſappoint-

ment, the cavalry had made way for the infantry. This proved to be a miſtake in ſome reſpects:—the new comers were all under arms; but, as had been ſaid, were now on foot. The ſquare was amazingly crouded with all the faſhionable people in the town. Bazile and his friend tried to advance thro' the throng; but dreſs, as Mr. de Melac had told him, will not always procure reſpect; ſtill, as they neither of them wanted aſſurance, they with ſome difficulty forced their way into the centre of the ſquare, where they could have a very good view of the troops. Bazile caſt his eyes round, and bowed to all thoſe he knew, whom he thought worthy ſuch a mark of his attention,—when a general buzz of "Here he comes! here he comes!" caught his ear; and he perceived the crowd,—far more polite than they had been to Berenger and him a few minutes before,—make way immediately for about a dozen officers of the firſt diſtinction, who were advancing. At their head came a young man about four and twenty, whoſe

dreſs

drefs informed the fpectators he was the Colonel Commandant of the lately arrived regiment. He was near fix feet high, rather ftout, and feemed formed for the diftinguifhed poft he held; his countenance, though placid was very expreffive, and remarkably interefting;—fine dark eyes, good hair, and a very regular fet of teeth, formed a *toute enfemble* truly ftriking to the numerous beholders,—and every perfon feemed to pay him an involuntary tribute of admiration as he paffed; and his politenefs to all thofe who were eager to facilitate his progrefs, and break the way for him, appeared to make a very ftrong impreffion upon their minds, and to redouble the efforts they made to convince him of their refpect. As this was the firft time he had appeared in public fince his arrival, as foon as he had paffed the crowd, before he turned towards his men, he looked round him, and made a general bow to the furrounding multitude,—who were very loud in their praifes of his fine manly figure; and Bazile, though he thought few

few people equalled himſelf in theſe reſpects, was forced to ſubſcribe to the truth of theſe remarks. However, like many more, he was very anxious to learn the name of this much-admired officer, and addreſſed all he knew for that purpoſe; but none were able to ſatisfy his curioſity,—which increaſed ſo much by theſe difficulties, that he actually addreſſed one of the officers in the young gentleman's ſuite, and made the ſame inquiry, who very politely replied, "The Duke de Civrac, Sir."

"The Duke de Civrac!" he repeated, ſufficiently loud for many of the ſpectators to profit by the information he had received. "How I ſhould glory in commanding ſo many brave fellows," ſaid he to Berenger. "I would march up to the very mouth of a cannon, if ſuch an action would procure me ſuch a rank in the army."

"You might get into one," ſaid a gentleman who ſtood near him, "before you would become ſuch a figure as the Colonel, young man."

Bazile looked round him, and was very much hurt, both by what he termed a very impertinent remark, and by the familiar appellation of *young man*, ſo freely beſtowed upon him.

All thoſe who thought themſelves entitled, advanced to pay their reſpects to the young Duke, who received every one with the greateſt affability; and each, when they retired, ſeemed equally ſatisfied with him and themſelves;—not always the caſe upon ſuch occaſions, though both parties are often at a loſs to know where the fault lies.

As ſoon as this ceremony was over, the Duke walked along the line; and, when he addreſſed his men, (while many of the ſpectators obſerved, he ſeemed born to command) his voice was loud and articulate, and at the ſame time melodious. If he reprimanded, it was in the gentleſt accents; and his men were ſo fond of him, they all dreaded to offend him;—not through any fears of

the ufual military punifhments upon fuch occafions—their ftrict obedience was the refult of far nobler fentiments. Having fpent about ten minutes giving orders, the Duke marched, at the head of his regiment, to the church of the Carmelite Friars, where mafs was immediately begun by the chaplain.

Bazile was foremoft in the crowd that followed;—indeed the church had feldom or ever been fo full before. Military mafs is generally looked upon as a fort of farce upon religion—a mere mummery. The officers condefcend to connive at it as a part of their fervice; but the Duke de Civrac approached the altar, as he would have done his Maker, with true reverence; and his officers all followed his example. Not a word was fpoken by either them or any of their men during the fervice, which was near a third longer than the aftonifhed multitude had been accuftomed to upon fuch occafions; and the band played only facred mufic.

music. Those who came prepared as usual to laugh, slipped out of the church when all was over, very much disappointed and ashamed: so striking are the effects of example; and a great man certainly has it in his power to do much good, or much harm, by his own behaviour in such circumstances. The Duke seemed actuated by true devotion, and totally free from affectation; and mass thus performed, with all military pomp and ceremony, was truly edifying. His Grace left the church with several superior officers belonging to the different regiments of infantry, who had accompanied him from the parade, out of compliment to his rank, and who were inwardly ashamed of the little respect they had hitherto paid to so sacred a duty.

Bazile and Berenger communicated their thoughts to each other, but neither could ridicule or laugh at unaffected piety; and Bazile thought, if he could but gain admittance

tance into this regiment, he ſhould ſoon be as great a man as the Colonel.

The moment he reached home, he began to launch out in praiſe of the Duke de Civrac, and to repeat the various encomiums he had heard beſtowed upon him.

"Oh! he is more than mortal, I find, by your account," ſaid Mr. de Melac, ſmiling at his warmth. Madame de Franval hoped he meant to profit by ſo excellent an example, which ſeemed to have made a deep impreſſion upon his mind.

Bazile perfectly underſtood this alluſion, as he was in general not particularly attentive during divine ſervice, therefore did not chuſe to debate the point with her; and Mr. de Melac aſked him how he meant to diſpoſe of his evening; adding, "I am going to dine with your grandmother: it is the ducaſſe or fete of her village; therefore, if you are not otherwiſe engaged, you may as

well accompany your ſiſters and Madame de Franval, who mean to drink their coffee with the old lady;—ſo large a party would have deranged her at dinner; but ſhe will be very glad to ſee you in the afternoon."

This was a requeſt Bazile perfectly underſtood; and it was ſo ſimple and ſo reaſonable, he could not ſtart a ſingle objection to the propoſal,—though he had promiſed Berenger to accompany him to the play, where they both preſumed was the greateſt likelihood of again ſeeing the Duke de Civrac. He pauſed, wondered he had not heard of the fête, and ſuppoſed there would be a great deal of company as the day was fine, then ſaid he ſhould certainly give up an engagement he had formed to attend his ſiſters, and pay his reſpects to his grandmother.

Mr. de Melac was pleaſed at his ready acquieſcence to his will; and having deſired them to order the carriage to fetch them home in the evening, ſet out on foot for Madame des Ormes.

CHAP. IV.

THE young people and Madame de Franval dined by themſelves. Bazile reflected with ſome regret upon the promiſe he had made his father, as he was fearful this fete would diſcover his relationſhip to the good old lady: however, he conſoled himſelf with reflecting his preſence would not accelerate that event; for, were his ſiſters queſtioned, they would certainly ſay who the good woman was; and, if his friends did make any remarks, he muſt tell her ſtory in the moſt favourable way. Her ſtyle of living he meant to impute to avarice, and a wiſh to leave the more behind her when ſhe died; and her ſeeing no company to her pride, which would not permit her to aſſociate with her inferiors.

Having

Having thus ſettled matters in his own mind, he ſet out with his ſiſters and Madame de Franval between three and four. Clemence remarked this was the firſt time ſince their arrival in France, he had honoured them ſo far, and proteſted ſhe was very happy he had taken ſo much pains upon the occaſion. He ſaid he thought nothing looked ſo abſurd, as to ſee a man eſcorting marriageable ſiſters about; if his father allowed them to mix more with the world, they would not want for beaux upon ſuch occaſions.

"Till now," ſaid Clemence, "I did not know I was of ſuch conſequence. However, I hope, if we do meet any body, they will know you are my brother; for I would not have any one ſuppoſe you were my lover for the world."

"And pray why, Madame Clemence?" ſaid Bazile?

"Becauſe you are infinitely too much of a fop; and they would certainly form a very diſadvantageous opinion of my taſte."

Erneſtine

Erneſtine and Madame de Franval laughed; and Bazile affected to join in their mirth,—though he did not reliſh the ſarcaſm.

When they reached Madame des Ormes, they found her ſeated in a little alcove in the front of her houſe, which was ſituated in the centre of the village, and had a neat graſs plat oppoſite the door; upon which a crowd of peaſants were aſſembled, dancing to the ſound of a pipe and tabor and two fiddles. Every countenance was exhilerated with a ſmile, and the ſpectators all ſeemed to enjoy the feſtive ſcene.

Madame des Ormes had always been partial to rural amuſements, though ſhe had never conſtantly reſided in the country. The moment ſhe caught ſight of her grandchildren, ſhe roſe to meet them, and gave them a moſt cordial welcome, particularly Bazile; who, as ſhe obſerved, was the greateſt ſtranger.

Mr.

Mr. de Melac had joined a party of his friends from Dunkirk. His ſurgeon, a droll, good-tempered man, who had made a fortune by his talents: his two nephews, ſmart young fellows, who trod in his ſteps; and his niece, a pretty amiable girl, about Erneſtine's age; with whom he now approached Madame des Ormes and her children.

Vanval, the ſurgeon, was a ſtout, ſhort figure, and had upon this grand occaſion (having dined at the *baillis*, or ſteward to the lord of the manor) adorned himſelf in his gala ſuit; which conſiſted of a ſcarlet coat, gold-worked buttons, lined with white ſatin; a ditto embroidered waiſtcoat; black ſilk breeches and ſtockings; amazing long worked ruffles; and an immenſe triangular cocked hat, which he carried under his arm.

"Mercy upon me, Mr. Vanval," ſaid Bazile, as he advanced, "you really make me

me perſpire to look at you. How can you wear ſcarlet and ſatin in ſuch weather?"

"*Parbleu!* Mr. Bazile," ſaid the ſurgeon, laughing, "I don't pay ſo much attention to the ſeaſons as you do. This has been my beſt ſuit theſe five years, and it was made in winter: the next I have ſhall be for the ſummer;—but I am too old to ſtand upon punctilio."

"And when you was young, my good friend," ſaid Mr. de Melac, "you attended to ſomething of more importance than dreſs."

Bazile, by way of atoning for his impertinent remark, offered his hand to Vanval's niece. Her brothers led out Erneſtine and Clemence; and, by way of completing the ſet, the ſurgeon entreated Madame des Franval to do him the ſame honour.

Mr. de Melac, who enjoyed ſeeing his children engaged in any innocent diverſion, brought Madame des Ormes to witneſs the gay

gay ſcene, who was exceſſively flattered by the marked attention he always paid her. Bazile felt very little ſo, by the encomiums the amiable woman beſtowed upon his performance, and began to repent he had given her ſuch an opportunity to diſplay the goodneſs of her heart. The ſurgeon's family had ſeen her before;—beſides, Vanval was a weak, illiterate being, who thought it his duty to provide for poor relations, and was commonly ſurrounded by needy nephews and nieces, and a ſtupid, half-ideot ſiſter, whom he totally ſupported, kept his houſe; therefore, he knew it would not be prudent to mention his ſentiments concerning his grandmother before them.

During theſe reflections, he perceived ſeveral of the officers he had admired ſo much in the morning advancing towards them on horſeback. He wondered what could have brought them;—they were certainly not come to the ducaſſe; but, perhaps, they were only taking an evening's

ride.

ride. He threw the cotillion into confusion—his attention was ſo much engroſſed by the horſemen, and made a ſudden ſtop, when he diſcovered the Duke de Civrac in the firſt who approached, mounted upon a very fine charger. His partner and his ſiſters called to him to go on; but Bazile, aſhamed to be ſeen dancing with a little *bourgeoiſe*, dreſſed in the moſt ſimple ſtyle, and at a village wake, by people with whom he was ſo anxious to become acquainted, would inſtantly, could he have deviſed any excuſe, have withdrawn from the throng,—convinced that the Duke, in particular, who had looked at him ſeveral times in the morning, would ſet him down for a *low fellow* beneath his notice.

Clemence and Mademoiſelle de Vanval could not bear to be thus ſtopped; they therefore dragged Bazile about, till they rouſed him from his reverie; but before he could recover himſelf, the Duke was cloſe to them,

and inſtantly checked his horſe, while he contemplated the dancers.

Bazile never ſtood ſo low in his own opinion, nor ever felt more mortified. His Grace ſeemed exceſſively pleaſed, and began to talk to ſeveral of the elder peaſants, who were among the ſpectators. They all knew he muſt be a man of rank; and, in a few minutes, his title became generally known. The bailli no ſooner heard ſo great a man was in the village, than he haſtened towards him with all ſpeed. His neighbours made way for him; and, according to the cuſtom of the country, he entreated that Monſeigneur would honour his cottage with his preſence.

His Grace, ever willing to oblige, and delighted to ſtudy human nature in every ſtation, with an affability which gained him the warm heart of the Flemiſh bailiff, inſtantly alighted, ſaying, "So kind an offer ought not to meet with a refuſal; ſhould it, Marquis?"

Marquis ?" turning to the major of his regiment, who had accompanied him, with a young cadet under the Duke's immediate protection.

"Certainly not," ſaid the Major, following the Duke's example, as did the cadet.

Their horſes were given to the grooms: they took a turn round the green, and were then very ceremoniouſly uſhered into the Baillis houſe, and into a large room, where ſtood a table that reached from one end to the other, covered with various eatables, and ſeveral bowls, in which were different wines, mixed according to people's taſtes; as negus, &c. A large arm chair ſtood at the upper end, of which his Grace was entreated to take poſſeſſion.

"Upon my word," ſaid the Duke, "this is true hoſpitality."

"Allow me to ſet ſomething which has not been touched before, your Grace," ſaid the

the bailli; "you are perhaps a ſtranger to our Flemiſh cuſtoms. This table remains covered for three days for all comers, without diſtinction; there are no limits to our noble Seigneur's generoſity; no one is obliged to me, your Grace,—I only do my duty."

Hams, tongues, a variety of cakes and tarts, peculiar to the country, were already ſet out. His Grace was delighted with the appearance, and told the Bailli they ſhould fare very well:—ſoldiers ought not to be difficult. But as this was the firſt day of the *féte*, the larder was plentifully ſupplied; and ſeveral cold things were immediately brought and placed before the Duke and his companions; ſuch as ſavoury pies, pigeons, and ducks in jelly, marbled veal, &c.

The three gentlemen had not long dined; but determined to do all the honour they could to the good man's repaſt. As ſoon as he placed every thing of the beſt

upon the table, and three or four bottles of wine, the Bailli hurried away in ſearch of Mr. de Melac, with whom he had become very intimate, ſince Madame des Ormes's reſidence in the village. He found him among the ſpectators talking to the ſurgeon, with whom the Bailli had long been intimate.

"For heaven's ſake, gentlemen," he ſaid, "accompany me home; you know not what diſtinguiſhed viſiters I have got, and how ill qualified I am to entertain them."

Neither Mr. de Melac nor the ſurgeon had been very near the Duke when he alighted; and were agreeing they would take another look at him when he came out of the houſe, as they did not chuſe to go in to ſtare at him; but this was a fair opportunity the ſurgeon thought, who proteſted dancing had made him thirſty, and he was juſt coming in ſearch of a glaſs of negus. The Bailli was for hurrying them along immedia ely

mediately; but Mr. de Melac ſaid, the Duke would very likely be offended at their thus forcing themſelves into his company.

"I am convinced you need not be under any ſuch apprehenſions," ſaid Vanval. "The Bailli, and his Grace's countenance, have ſtrangely deceived me, if he is not one of the beſt tempered men in the world; beſides, I have told him my houſe is free for all comers; and, as you have been a great traveller, Mr. de Melac, you are moſt likely to amuſe ſuch a man.

Curioſity now induced Mr. de Melac to comply with the Bailli's requeſt; and intereſt made the ſurgeon joyfully cloſe with the propoſal. They therefore followed him home.

The Bailli never ſpoke till he got to the door of the room, in which the ſtrangers were ſitting: he then thus began—"Sen-

ſible of my own deficiency, 'your Grace, I have brought two of my friends, who are come from Dunkirk to the *fête*, both travelled and learned men, to come and thank your Grace, in my name, for the ſupreme honour you have done my poor cottage."

The old ſurgeon thought this learned harangue infinitely too prolix,—which, he preſumed, had been compoſed during their ſilent walk towards the houſe; he therefore gave the Bailli a pinch, to induce him to bring it to a concluſion,—which the Duke diſcovered, from the movement of his hand, and could hardly conceal a ſmile. When they entered, the Duke was ſeated near one of the windows; and, the weather being very warm, had taken off his cap, which laid by him. De Melac and Vanval made a ſort of awkward *entreé*, owing to the Bailli's curious introduction of them, and to his moving firſt on one ſide, then on the other, to let them paſs; at laſt De Melac was able to advance to pay his compliments.

The

The Duke had rofe, and was ftanding to receive them; but, the moment De Melac looked him in the face, he feemed riveted to the fpot, where he had ftopped for fome feconds before he could either bow or take his eyes off his face. This was the firft time he had ever felt at all embarraffed in the prefence of any man, and even now he was at a lofs to define his feelings: his countenance varied feveral times, while he tried to repair his firft want of politenefs, by bowing a fecond time; but involuntarily he allowed his eyes to remain longer than they ought to have done fixed upon the Duke; he once more withdrew them, and tried to pay his compliments; but fancied he fucceeded worfe than Vanval would have done in a fimilar fituation—fo very much diffatisfied with himfelf. He tried to make way for the furgeon, who was always the fame in all company, and equally at his eafe; as he never intended or thought he could offend, he feldom or ever did: he bowed with the utmoft refpect, and was

equally favoured, as Mr. de Melac had been, with a polite return of the compliment. But, as De Melac ſtill ſeemed very much confuſed, which the Duke ſolely attributed to their ſtrange introduction, the Surgeon, by way of relieving his friend, and ſetting all to rights, ſaid, "I am afraid, Monſeignior, you have not formed a very high opinion of Flemiſh politeneſs; but the Bailli has ſaid ſo much in mine and my friend's praiſe, we are both afraid we ſhall fall very ſhort of your Grace's expectations."

The humble look that accompanied this ſpeech, and the honeſt frankneſs a very plain countenance expreſſed, prepoſſeſſed the Duke greatly in favour of the ſpeaker. An expreſſive ſmile convinced Vanval he had ſucceeded; and a polite entreaty that they would join the party, ſet De Melac quite at his eaſe,—though he could not refrain from taking another ſide glance at the Duke

while he was feating himfelf. The Surgeon perceived fomething had ftruck him; and, with a bluntnefs he feldom tried to check, having firft look'ed at the Duke, and then at De Melac, faid, "Your Grace muft forgive me; but I proteft I never faw fo ftrong a family likenefs between any two people as between you and my friend here; and I appeal to thofe gentlemen for the truth of my obfervation;—if Mr. De Melac had not been a very handfome man, I fhould not have fpoken my fentiments fo freely.

The Duke fmiled, and, looking at De Melac, who was more confufed than ever, faid, "Far from being offended, Sir, I think you have paid me a very high compliment; for I really never faw a gentleman I fhould more wifh to refemble than your friend."

The Major made the fame remark, and protefted the likenefs had ftruck him the moment he faw Mr. de Melac.

D 4 Mr.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SA...

Mr. de Melac having rather recovered himſelf, ſaid he ought to feel highly flattered, particularly by what his Grace had ſaid; and all he could ſay in extenuation of his friend's rudeneſs was, that he was a Flamand, and had no intention to offend.—As this was ſaid in a joke, they laughed, and the Surgeon was pleaſed. The converſation now turned upon rural amuſements,—of which the Duke profeſſed himſelf a great admirer; and ſaid there were few ſights he enjoyed ſo much as the village feaſts or wakes in the South of France; and, though he looked upon the French peaſants to be in ſome reſpects poorer than thoſe of many other countries, ſtill he was convinced they were the happieſt ſet of people upon earth: their toils during the week were all forgot in a dance on Sunday. "But theſe Flemiſh *carmeſs* or *ducaſs's* only occur once a year, I think, Sir," turning to the Surgeon.

"No oftener. The peaſantry about here are among the pooreſt claſs, yet they often dance on a Sunday."

"My

"My houſe is in Burgundy," ſaid the Duke, "and there I have frequently joined in the evening revels. The peaſants of that province are comparatively rich; and they ſeem more lively, and look more healthy than I have ſeen on this ſide of Paris. During the vintage, they work and ſing all day, and conclude the evening with a dance,—which, they have often aſſured me, makes them forget their fatigues. The Flamands, I believe, may diſpute the palm for honeſty with any country."

"I believe it, Sir," ſaid the Surgeon; "but I muſt acknowledge they are rather lazy and dirty."

The Duke ſmiled; and the Surgeon begged leave to drink his health."

The Duke readily returned the compliment; and then, turning to Mr. de Melac, whom Valvan was talking with about Guadaloupe, aſked him how this cold part of

France agreed with him, after having refided in the Weft-Indies?

"I have an excellent conftitution, faid De Melac: "no climate difagrees with me, if I can but take plenty of exercife, and refide in a tolerably airy fituation, which is my cafe at prefent."

"I own," faid the Duke, "I think any of our provinces preferable to the capital;—indeed I am particularly partial to ruftic amufements. At Paris I always get lazy; and the mind, as well as the body, becomes enervated, I am convinced, by inceffant diffipation; and I am obliged, in fome refpects, to be like other people—at leaft during the winter months."

De Melac had expected fome very different obfervations, as he had often heard men, much his Grace's inferiors in point of rank, complain bitterly of the *ennui* of a garrifon town;—indeed, he had heard many of fafhion fay, it was impoffible to exift out of

Paris;

Paris; but this gentleman ſeemed ſuperior to all kind of affectation.

As they ſat near a window, they had a very good view of the ſports upon the green.

"I think I ſaw you dancing, Sir," ſaid the Duke, looking at the Surgeon.

"Yes, Sir: I don't like to be thought old; and having ſo excellent a partner, I was willing to try what I could do; but I was ſoon obliged to ſit down."

"Thoſe two elegant girls," ſaid his Grace, (alluding to Erneſtine and Clemence) ſeem to enter into the ſpirit of the diverſion with a vivacity truly becoming their age, and I have ſeldom ſeen two better dancers."

"They are this gentleman's daughters," ſaid the Surgeon; "and do infinite honour both to him and their governeſs, who was my partner."

De Melac, though highly flattered, only bowed in ſilence.

"Do let us walk out," ſaid the Duke; "we cannot ſee the ſports to advantage here;—and I think, if either of the young ladies are diſengaged, I ſhall ſolicit the hand of one of them, with your permiſſion, Sir, (turning to De Melac) for the next dance."

"They are now dancing with my nephews," ſaid the Surgeon; "and I am ſure they will either of them be proud of reſigning their partners to your Grace."

This propoſal did not exactly meet with Mr. de Melac's approbation; ſtill, he could not with propriety ſtart any objections: he therefore followed him out, and remained with the reſt of the party among the ſpectators till the dance was concluded.

At the Duke's requeſt, he then introduced him to Erneſtine, and the young Cadet to Clemence. The Major, who was much about

about Madame de Franval's age, ſolicited the favour of her hand, which was immediately granted; and De Melac, encouraged by ſuch an example, joined the ſet with Mademoiſelle de Vanval.

This grand party put a ſtop to all the other dancing, as every one was eager to ſee the great men ſhew off. Bazile alone was very much diſpleaſed, from being in a manner excluded from a party he thought himſelf almoſt entitled to have joined. How abſurd of his father to think of hopping about, becauſe old Vanval had made a fool of himſelf! Why did not he deſire *him* to make the fourth gentleman in this diſtinguiſhed ſet: it would certainly have been better than expoſing himſelf. Theſe were his reflections, while he ſecretly admired the elegance and preciſion of the Colonel's movements;—while his father felt really flattered, when he ſaw with what diſtinguiſhed, nay, even delicate, politeneſs he treated Erneſtine.

When the dance was over, the Duke, according to the eſtabliſhed cuſtom, reſigned his fair partner, and led out the Bailli's daughter,—who was very ſhort—far from handſome—and dreſſed in the true peaſant ſtyle. The Duke had found out who ſhe was, and would not take a denial,—though ſhe was frightened out of her wits, and wiſhed very much to be excuſed: however, having ſenſe enough to diſcover it was meant as a compliment to her father, and that he had no inclination to laugh at her, ſhe did her beſt, and was highly pleaſed with her gay, good-humoured partner.

Bazile was almoſt petrified when he ſaw whom his Grace led out the ſecond time; but preſumed he only meant to walk the figure with ſuch a partner: he was therefore ſtill more aſtoniſhed to ſee him exert himſelf even more than with Erneſtine, and abſolutely took pains to encourage ſuch a creature, which, in his opinion, was very much beneath a man of his conſequence;

and

and he thought with how much more ſpirit he would have acted, had he been Duke de Civrac. Dancing with *his* ſiſter was one thing; but to honour a poor Bailli's daughter with his hand was low to a degree. He began now to ſuppoſe he meant to run the gauntlet through all the peaſants; but the next time the Duke preſented his hand to the lively little Clémence. She thought nothing of his ſuperior rank,—was only pleaſed ſo excellent a dancer had fallen to her ſhare, and was all life and gaiety. But, unfortunately, a ſhower came on unexpectedly, which broke up the diverſion; and the company began to make for the neareſt houſes—particularly the Bailli's, who would have kept them all in the rain, if the Duke had not ſaid (turning to the Major) "Let us mount our horſes, and make the beſt of our way to Dunkirk, elſe we ſhall prevent many of theſe good people from getting ſhelter."

The rain ſeemed as if it would be heavy; and Mr. de Melac entreated the Duke and his

his friends would ſtep into Madame des Ormes's cottage, (ſhewing him the neat dwelling ſhe inhabited) and aſſured them ſhe had no company. The Duke thanked him, and accompanied him thither.

The good lady had gone home as ſoon as Mr. de Melac went to the Bailli's, and had not ſeen what went forward afterwards; but Bazile hurried on to tell her who was coming; and the old lady was riſing from her large arm chair when the Duke entered, and would fain have had him take poſſeſſion of it; but he inſiſted upon her reſuming her ſeat with an earneſtneſs which admitted of no denial, and convinced Mr. de Melac he paid the utmoſt reſpect to old age.

The grooms were ordered to take the horſes home, and to ſend the carriage as ſpeedily as poſſible. Mr. de Melac's was already arrived.

The converſation became very general during this interval; but the Duke began

to

to think the time long, as it grew duſk; and he was fearful the ſhutting of the gates would be retarded upon his account, when one of his grooms returned in a ſmall cabriolet belonging to the Major, as his Grace's coachman was not to be found.

Mr. de Melac begged the gentlemen would make uſe of his carriage—his ſon and himſelf would ſleep in the country; but as they did not chuſe to derange them, it was at laſt ſettled the Major ſhould make the ſixth in the coach, and the Duke and his young *protegée* ſet off in the cabriolet.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

As soon as the coach had moved on, Mr. de Melac and his party had each something to say in praise of the Duke, and all wished very much to hear the Major's opinion of him.

"The greatest encomiums must fall very short of doing my noble commander justice, Sir," said he, addressing his discourse to Mr. de Melac; "he has not his equal in the service. Where do you see such a regiment?—all chosen men, and men of real moral principles. I don't think there is either an absolute, bad, or a drunken one among them. At first the Colonel was thought very

very ſevere; but he is now almoſt adored by his ſoldiers, and generally beloved and eſteemed by all thoſe who have the leaſt claim to his friendſhip: his failings are merely thoſe of human nature,—while his virtues for ſo young a man are truly godlike: he ſpends infinitely more time than he is obliged to do with his regiment, becauſe he knows many of his under officers are ſufferers by his abſence; and, for figure and temper, I think he ſtands unrivalled. He has given unequivocal marks of his courage,—though he never was heard to boaſt of having been engaged in an affair of honour; but he would at any time riſk his life to ſave another perſon's. Such, Sir, is the univerſal character of the nobleman you have juſt parted from."

"How truly amiable!" ſaid Mr. de Melac, glancing his eyes towards Bazile, who perfectly underſtood what he meant. "I preſume he was not brought up in the capital—he ſeems ſo totally free from—"

Mr.

Mr. de Melac paufed, from not finding a proper word to exprefs his meaning.

The Major fmiled, and concluded his phrafe. "From the prefent fafhionable vices, I prefume, you mean, Sir. Yet he was brought up in the centre of luxury and diffipation; but under the eyes of his mother, one of the moft amiable women in the world. His father died before he was born; a moft worthy man, affifted the Duchefs in this arduous undertaking, and, under their joint infpection, he received leffons from all the firft mafters Paris afforded.

Mr. de Melac wifhed to have afked feveral more queftions, but their arrival at Dunkirk prevented him from giving way to his curiofity.—They foon reached the houfe where the Colonel lodged, and there the Major wifhed to be fet down.

The Duke was juft arrived; and, upon feeing the carriage ftop, came out to receive his

his friend, and wiſh Mr. de Melac and his family a good evening. As ſoon as the coach drove from the door, "What think you of our new acquaintance?" ſaid he, turning to the Major.

"I like de Melac exceſſively; and his daughters ſeem amiable, unaffected girls. As for his ſon, he mixed ſo little in the converſation, I ſhould be puzzled to give my opinion of him; but I rather think he will never make a fortune by his talents;—and his dreſs was ſo ſtudied, and ſo exactly in the reigning faſhion, and he ſeemed to pay ſo much attention to it, I am convinced he is an egregious coxcomb.

"In theſe provincial towns," ſaid the Duke, "a ſilly ſort of emulation, in point of appearance, is very prevalent among men of his age and ſtation: he may poſſeſs many amiable qualities, and ſtill allow himſelf to be drawn in to imitate his companions in that reſpect. But did you really think, when the old ſurgeon ſaid he diſcovered the great

great likeneſs which ſeemed to have ſtruck him ſo much, there was any reſemblance between me and De Melac?"

"Upon my honour, I ſpoke as I thought," ſaid the Major. "There certainly does exiſt a ſtrong likeneſs between you, (making proper allowances for the difference of your ages) and you are much of a height, and certainly equally reſemble each other in point of figure;—and there poſitively is a ſort of dignity in Mr. de Melac's manners I little expected to have ſeen in thoſe of a provincial Receiver-General."

"I made the ſame remark," ſaid the Duke;—indeed I like him much; he ſeems to poſſeſs an excellent underſtanding, and infinite knowledge of the world. I preſume he was in an extenſive line of buſineſs in the Weſt-Indies: I aſſure you I ſhall be happy to cultivate his acquaintance."

The Major made various remarks upon the *fête* and Flemiſh cuſtoms, which ſerved them

them for converſation till they ſeparated for the night.

Mr. de Melac, on their return, made ſome very judicious comments upon the praiſes the Major had beſtowed upon the Duke, and told Bazile he hoped he would never be more out in his judgment.

His Grace did not ſtand quite ſo high in Bazile's opinion as he had done in the morning, and he had liſtened with a ſentiment bordering upon envy to the Major's account of him. He therefore now ſaid he thought he was rather too familiar with his inferiors.

"Why he did not take much notice of you," ſaid Mr. de Melac. "In his place you would, no doubt, have acted with infinitely more propriety: however, if I have the pleaſure of ever hearing one half as much ſaid in your praiſe, I ſhall be perfectly ſatisfied with your conduct; and if his Grace ever deign to notice me again, I ſhall be very

very much flattered, and feel myfelf highly honoured by his condefcenfion."

In the courfe of a week, the Duke de Civrac had received the compliments of all the nobles in and round Dunkirk, but faw no one among them he liked fo well as Mr. de Melac, notwithftanding the difference in their ages; but the Receiver-General was not like many others, whom he had treated with equal politenefs. They had always forced themfelves into his company,—while De Melac almoft feemed to avoid him. The fact was, he by no means (much as he liked him) wifhed to give him any pretence for calling at his houfe, as he was certainly in every refpect a very improper companion for his children; for was he to treat his fon with the flighteft degree of familiarity, it would certainly turn his head; and he ftill lefs wifhed him to notice his daughters. Yet they often met cf an evening, as the Duke always took a ride if the weather was fine, and in general went the road which

led

led through the village Madame des Ormes inhabited;—it branched off, into various directions, a little further, and was much pleaſanter than the ſea coaſt; and, as he always ſtopped to addreſs Mr. de Melac, and moſtly entered into converſation with him, an imperceptible familiarity ſoon leſſened the diſtance which rank had placed between him and the Receiver-General in leſs than a fortnight. His Grace never paſſed Madame des Ormes's door without calling to aſk how ſhe did, if he neither met nor overtook De Melac; in ſhort, it became a ſort of rendezvous for each, and the young ladies paid their viſits to their grandmother of a morning.—As the Duke therefore never met them, he eaſily gueſſed their father wiſhed to keep them out of his way, and perfectly forgave the ſuſpicions ſuch conduct ſeemed to imply; indeed he looked upon it as a very ſtrong proof of Mr. de Melac's prudence and good ſenſe. He moſt probably thought he bore ſome reſemblance to moſt young men of rank and faſhion of

his own age; and as he could not ſuppoſe he would ever marry either of his daughters, did not wiſh to put it in his power to attempt to gain their affections with leſs honourable views.

This behaviour therefore increaſed inſtead of leſſening his eſteem for this excellent father; their interviews grew longer every day; and ſometimes Mr. de Melac accompanied his Grace home to ſupper. Trade, politics, and the ſtate of the French finances were their general topicks; and his Grace ſoon found he could not ſtart any ſubject in which Mr. de Melac was not more converſant than himſelf.

One evening when they were *tête-à-tête*, and ſeated in Madame des Ormes's garden, the Duke talking of his profeſſion, the diſcourſe inſenſibly turned upon fortification and military tacticks. De Melac aſked if he thought Dunkirk could be eaſily taken.

"Not

"Not if it was properly defended," he replied—pointing out the various methods he ſhould adopt, were he ever called upon to put his ſkill to the proof.

They debated the ſubject with infinite good humour on both ſides, though their opinions did not exactly coincide; and the Duke found Mr. de Melac underſtood the art of war full as well as he did; which induced him to aſk if he had ever been in the ſervice, as he ſeemed perfectly acquainted with all the technical military terms, which, to be thoroughly maſter of the different ſciences, an officer ought to ſtudy.

The queſtion, though put in ſuch flattering terms, evidently embarraſſed De Melac; for his colour heightened, while he ſaid, "For a ſhort time, in the early part of my life."

The Duke was hurt to find he had unintentionally revived ſome very diſagreeable

reflections in his new friend's mind, and was convinced some strange circumstance must have induced a man, so much *au fait* in the duties of his profession, to quit the service,—for he seemed to have very high notions of honour; but it was a subject he could not discuss. He therefore gave a different turn to the conversation; and they soon parted.

CHAP. VI.

DURING ſupper, Mr. de Melac generally mentioned what had paſſed between him and the Duke, if he had ſeen him in the courſe of the evening,—which recitals were meant as a ſtimulus for Bazile, who was exceedingly anxious to be upon equal terms of familiarity with him,—though from very different reaſons. He therefore aſked his father why he never invited the Duke home.

Becauſe I don't wiſh him to ſuppoſe I look upon you as a fit companion for him. When I think you worthy the honour, believe me I ſhall not object to introducing

you to any *good* man of *any* rank. At present, you are a youth compared to the Duke, and a mere boy in point of real knowledge: you have much to learn before your company will be coveted by men of ſenſe of any age. Try to follow the excellent example this young nobleman affords you, and let me have the ſatisfaction to find you equally eſteemed and reſpected at his age; for reſpect is as much the tribute of merit as of rank."

Theſe lectures by no means pleaſed Bazile; and each ſucceeding day increaſed his diſguſt for the line of life he found himſelf in a manner forced to adopt. Berenger was his ſole confident, and to him he expreſſed aſtoniſhment at the frequent interviews between his father and the Duke, which ſeemed only ſpent in moralizing; and aſked Berenger if he was Duke de Civrac, and Colonel Commandant of one of the fineſt regiments in the kingdom, whether he would ſpend his evenings as he did,—riding up and down

dusty lanes, or *prosing* with an old man about the duties of his profession.

Berenger remarked, the Duke most probably did it to kill time, and the play-house could not answer that end so effectually; accustomed as he was to the Paris theatres, their strolling actors could only serve him to laugh at; and no doubt he always supped and concluded his evenings at the houses of the different nobility in the town. He had often seen his carriage very late at the Commandant's, and at various other hotels. "Do you suppose he is like your father?—retires, because the **cloche bourgeoise* rings at ten o'clock. I think if you had your father's fortune, you would put your house upon rather a more respectable footing."

* A bell rings in all garrison towns at that hour, and is looked upon as a sort of order for the lower class of citizens to retire; and after that, every one is obliged to carry a light.

"At

"At preſent it reſembles a convent," ſaid Bazile. "I wiſh to God both my ſiſters were married, and then our doors would not be ſhut againſt all my acquaintance—at leaſt thoſe my father has not ſelected for my companions."

"Talking of marriage," ſaid Berenger, "do you know it has ſtruck me the Duke may be in love with your eldeſt ſiſter: ſhe is a deviliſh fine girl; and who knows but theſe private interviews may be partly in making arrangements for the wedding—Your father is very rich, and he would certainly come down handſomely upon the occaſion; and many a nobleman has married into a Farmer General's family;—ſurely yours is as reſpectable as theirs, or the deuce is in it."

"You have certainly gueſſed right, Berenger," ſaid Bazile. "The Duke danced with Erneſtine at the *ducaſſe*; and, though ſhe is my ſiſter, I muſt allow ſhe is very handſome. The Duke, by my father's account of him, has a fine number of antedeluvian

deluvian notions; and he means, no doubt, to marry for love;—and if he is fond of moralizing, he could not have met with his match better than in my dad; who, between you and me, would have made an excellent Monk; and my gandmother (it ought to be obferved he had mentioned this lady before to his friend) would make as good a Lady Abbefs. Between them both, I dare fay, they extol Erneftine to the fkies, and the Duke makes love by proxy; for Erneftine vifits the old lady every morning, to hear, I fuppofe, all the fine things he has faid of her over night; and my father keeps them apart to bring matters to a conclufion, I will be bound, and to prevent accidents—you take me, Berenger."

The friend laughed at Bazile's wit; and protefted, if he was in his place, and wifhed, like him, to enter the army, he would ftrike while the iron was hot, and afk the Duke at once to receive him into his regiment. "Depend upon it he will be ready enough

 juft

juſt now to do any thing to ſerve any part of the family; and your father will not dare object to any propoſal that he may make at the preſent juncture."

"Very true, my dear friend," ſaid the flighty Bazile, who already ſaw himſelf a Cornet in the regiment. "The only difficulty will be, how to obtain a private audience of his Grace."

"Write him a polite note," ſaid this diſinterefted friend, "and beg leave to ſee him upon buſineſs of importance; convince him you think yourſelf upon a footing with him, and he will treat you accordingly; beſides, it will make him ſuppoſe you are in the ſecret."

"But, if it ſhould come to my father's ears," ſaid Bazile.

"There is not the ſlighteſt chance of that," ſaid his friend, "becauſe you can entreat the Duke not to mention it; and I think you may depend upon my diſcretion."

Bazile

Bazile aſſured him he would truſt his life in his hands.

The next day they agreed to meet again to write this important letter, and ſettle the time which would be moſt proper to deliver it; and, in the mean while, Bazile determined to ſift the ſecret out of Clemence, who was ſtill in ſome reſpects his confident. For this purpoſe he drew her apart in the morning, mentioned his ſuſpicions as amounting to facts, and aſked her if ſhe had not heard the matter mentioned by their father or grandmother.

Clemence, though five years younger than Bazile, poſſeſſed more judgment: ſhe was therefore perfectly convinced no ſuch matter was in agitation;—yet would not let ſo favourable an opportunity eſcape her to exerciſe her ſatirical talents upon her credulous brother. She affected to believe what he ſaid, but aſſured him ſhe was not in the ſecret,—yet acknowledged ſhe thought

ſomething was going forward; and produced ſuch ridiculous circumſtances in ſupport of her aſſertion, that any one, except Bazile, muſt have ſeen ſhe was laughing at him. She then congratulated him upon his brilliant proſpects; adding, "How pompous it will ſound, Bazile, when you and I can talk of our ſiſter the Ducheſs, and our brother the Duke: his Grace will certainly purchaſe you a place at court. Now I reflect, he certainly mentioned ſomething of the kind to my grandmother; that is, that the poſt of Screen to the Private Apartments was vacant;—who knows but he was thinking of you at the time?"

"Screen to the Private Apartments, child! you muſt have made a miſtake."

"Not at all. Some great man always ſtands or lies, I hardly know which, between the King and the fire, to ſcreen his Majeſty's legs from being ſcorched;—or, perhaps, he kneels. Think what a noble employment and brilliant title—*Mr. L'Ecran des Petits Appartemens.* How ſuperior to

Mr. Bazile Melac, *Premier Commis du Receiveur-General de Dunquerque.**"

"Don't talk nonſenſe, Clemence; I ſhould prefer going into the army to any poſt at court."

"Oh! I dare ſay his Grace will provide for you in any line: only, as you are rather *frilleux*†, I thought the poſt I mentioned would exactly ſuit you."

A ſummons to breakfaſt broke off the converſation; and Bazile already ſaw himſelf in command of this ſhewy regiment, and had no doubt of attaining the *Bâton de Marechal* before he was his father's age.

In the afternoon, he met Berenger at the appointed time, and told him all that had paſſed between him and Clemence.

* Firſt Clerk to the Receiver-General of Dunkirk.

† Chilly.

Berenger

Berenger had never heard of the poſt ſhe mentioned, but did not doubt it was a very honourable one: however, ſtill adviſed him to apply to the Duke; becauſe, if he once got admitted into his regiment, he would be ſecure, even ſhould any thing happen to break off the match;—and his taſk was become infinitely more eaſy now; for, from what Clemence had ſaid, there was little doubt but the Duke had it in actual contemplation to provide for him handſomely, and place him in a rank ſuitable to his brother-in-law.

They adjourned to a houſe they often frequented to compoſe the epiſtle in queſtion; which was, by Berenger's advice, very ſhort —only, as they had previouſly agreed, to requeſt an interview during the courſe of the following day.

Berenger ſaid he would deliver it to the Duke's ſervant late in the evening, and leave word he would call early in the morning for

an anſwer; but Bazile over-ruled this propoſal, and ſaid he had better carry it between nine and ten in the morning, and wait for the anſwer; for his father had often ſupped with the Duke of late, and he would not have him know of this application for the world.

Bazile promiſed to ſlip out of the office about nine o'clock, and wait his return in a neighbouring ſtreet; and ſeriouſly aſſured Berenger he would take upon himſelf to provide for him as ſoon as he was ſettled.

At the appointed time Bazile ſlipped out—met his friend, and proceeded with him within ſight of the Duke's lodgings: he then ſtruck into an adjoining ſtreet, where Berenger was to come to him as ſoon as he had got the anſwer.—This interval appeared an age to Bazile. He paced the ſtreet with haſty ſteps for near a quarter of an hour; when, to his inexpreſſible joy, he ſaw Berenger haſtening towards him with a letter in

his hand. Bazile inſtantly ſeized it, tore it open, and read as follows :—

" *My dear Sir,*

" I am at home, alone, perfectly at leiſure, " and ſhall be very happy to ſee you imme- " diately ; or if any other time of the day " after twelve o'clock ſhould ſuit you bet- " ter, pray let me know, as I have no en- " gagements that will interfere with my wiſh " to ſee you at your own hour.

" DE CIVRAC."

" There !" ſaid Berenger—" I think you have nothing to fear now : this is a pretty good proof of what is going forward."

The fact was, the Duke thought the letter came from the father inſtead of the ſon, as it was ſigned De Melac ; and preſumed, when he inquired of his valet who brought it, that Berenger was one of his clerks—Bazile little gueſſing ſo natural a

quiproquo

quiproquo had induced the Duke to addrefs him fo politely.

Bazile, highly delighted, haftened home: he ought to have been in the office fooner, but, fortunately, he had not been inquired for, as his father, when he had any particular bufines, wrote in his private ftudy: he therefore haftened to drefs, told the clerks what to fay if he was afked for, and haftened to obey this agreeable fummons.

CHAP. VII.

HE ſoon reached the Duke's lodgings, and, upon giving his name, was immediately ſhewn into his dreſſing-room.

The Duke was at breakfaſt, anxiouſly expecting his new friend, whom he was convinced, from the general tenor of his character, muſt have had ſome very powerful motives to induce him to make the requeſt the note he had juſt received contained. He was therefore very much ſurpriſed when Bazile made his appearance. As his expreſſive countenance was the index of his feelings, Bazile inſtantly diſcovered he was an unexpected gueſt;—though it never ſtruck him the Duke might not have known his hand-writing, nor that his father's Chriſ-

tian

tian name began with an A inftead of a B. The Duke, who had rofe upon his entrance, now defired him to take a chair, while he refumed his own feat; but did not inquire (as he certainly would have done, had it been his father) whether he had breakfafted, nor afked him to partake of his meal, but feemed to wait in filence an explanation of the motives which had made an almoft total ftranger requeft a private interview; at laft, finding his vifiter did not fpeak, he faid, "I hope Mr. de Melac is well, Sir?"

This queftion required fome anfwer; and Bazile, in the greateft confufion, and with no fmall degree of hefitation, ftammered out, "Very well; I am much obliged to your Grace." He had never yet been *téte-à-téte* with fo great a man; and all his felf-confequence forfook him in his prefence; all the fine things he meant to have faid efcaped his memory, and he found himfelf very unequal to the tafk which had appeared fo eafy to him but a fhort time before;

before; and, to have thus intruded himſelf into ſuch a man's preſence, without ſome oſtenſible reaſon for the liberty, might be conſtrued into an inſult: he therefore made an attempt to ſpeak, but the words that preſented themſelves were not thoſe he intended to uſe.

The Duke, who plainly ſaw, and really pitied his embarraſſment, began to think he had got into ſome ſcrape, and wanted either his aſſiſtance or advice to extricate himſelf, he therefore gave him full time to recollect himſelf, by pouring out ſlowly, and drinking a diſh of chocolate; but finding him ſtill ſilent, at length ſaid, "I hope nothing has happened to diſturb you, Mr. Bazile? you come from your father, I preſume: our acquaintance is certainly not of long ſtanding, yet there are few men for whom I have ſo great an eſteem; therefore pray ſpeak out—believe me I ſhall be very happy if I can be of any uſe to him."

Rather

Rather encouraged by this ſpeech, Bazile ventured to ſay, while his eyes were fixed on the floor, "I have taken the liberty to wait upon your Grace upon my own account. I have long had a wiſh, though I believe my father don't abſolutely approve of the notion——"

Bazile pauſed; but as he received no anſwer, (indeed the Duke would have been at a loſs what to ſay) thus went on.

"But a word from your Grace, I know, would have great weight;—in ſhort, I have a very great deſire to ſerve my king and country: I have ſtudied fortification under my father, and a very good maſter of that ſcience in Guadaloupe; and I am not fond of a counting-houſe. I have no doubt but my father would conſent to my wiſhes, if your Grace would do me the favour to intereſt yourſelf in my behalf, and would deign to receive me into your own regiment.

Having

Having thus difclofed his mighty fecret, he ftopped, and waited his doom in fearful filence, without once daring to raife his eyes.

The Duke thought it very poffible he might not like a counting-houfe, yet thought it rather extraordinary he fhould apply to him to effect a change in his fituation: however, far from being offended, he faid, in the mildeft accent, " My regard for your father, Mr. Bazile, makes me really wifh to ferve you, and, could I do it with propriety, in your own way; but your requeft muft have the fanction of his approbation before I can promife to gratify your inclination. You feem to wifh me to perfuade Mr. de Melac to confent to your defire: you muft know my youth, and confequent inexperience, totally precludes me from advifing a man of his years and fuperior underftanding in fuch a cafe. No father can be more interefted in the welfare of a fon,

ſon, I am convinced; and he would juſtly deem me very meddling and impertinent was I to take upon myſelf to interfere in his family affairs. At preſent there is no vacancy in my regiment—but that would not prevent me from putting you *en ſuite*; but, as I told you before, it muſt be with the full approbation of your father. Mention your wiſhes to him again; and, after you have alledged all the arguments you can adduce to bring him into your way of thinking, liſten to what he has to ſay on his ſide of the queſtion, with the attention his age, experience, and, more eſpecially, the love he bears you entitles him to: you have not the ſame reaſons to alledge in ſupport of your cauſe many young men can give, nor is the duty required ſo eaſy as ſome people imagine. However, thus far I will engage to interfere in the matter; if you are averſe to ſtarting the ſubject, (which I rather ſuppoſe has been often debated between your father and yourſelf) in a *téte-à-téte*, if you will

will walk with him towards Madame des Ormes this evening, where I have frequently met him, I ſhall take that road, and will join him as uſual. This will afford you an opportunity of preferring your requeſt to me before him; and, if I don't find him very averſe to your wiſhes, you may depend upon my ſtrenuous ſupport. Should Mr. de Melac not find himſelf inclined to walk this evening, let it be to-morrow, or the next day; for I am really as anxious as you no doubt are, to hear what he has to ſay upon the ſubject: men of our age muſt reap ſome benefit from the arguments of a man of your father's ſenſe and experience, even though they militate againſt our deſires."

His Grace now took out his watch, ſaying, "I beg your pardon, Sir, but I muſt dreſs for the parade; therefore, with your leave, we will poſtpone any further diſcuſſion of this ſubject till we meet again."

Bazile was by no means ſatisfied, but knew it was in vain to ſtart any objections; therefore, in almoſt as much confuſion as when he entered, made his parting bow, and retired.

At the corner of the firſt ſtreet ſtood Berenger, who called out the moment he caught ſight of Bazile, "Well, what luck, my dear friend? am I to wiſh you joy?"

Bazile's dejected countenance inſtantly damped all his ſanguine hopes; but when he had related, nearly word for word, what had paſſed between him and the Duke, he ſaid, "Why look ſo dull and diſappointed then, my dear friend? what more did you expect? has not his Grace promiſed to put you in the *ſuite* of his regiment? for, can you ſuppoſe your father will heſitate about placing you under the care of ſuch a man? He will provide for you without his being at a ſhilling expence. No, no, Mr. de Melac knows his own intereſt better than all that comes

comes to. I would give a hundred Louis this moment for your chance, if I had them; beſides, as your brother-in-law, the Duke, will never reſt ſatisfied till he has placed you at the head of a regiment. He did not mention his approaching marriage?"

"Not a word about it; only ſaid there was not a man in the world he had a higher eſteem for than my father, nor a greater wiſh to ſerve."

"He could not have ſpoke plainer," ſaid Berenger. "Run home directly, my dear Bazile—get in unobſerved, if poſſible—change your dreſs, and ſet down to your deſk—for it will be moſt prudent to keep the old man in a good humour at preſent. Offer very politely to accompany him this evening, to pay your reſpects to your dear grandmother;—let me ſee you when you return, and I ſhall expect you at the old place at nine—ſo adieu. I muſt run, or my buck of a maſter and myſelf ſhan't ſet our horſes together.

Bazile's

Bazile's hopes were rather revived by Berenger's explanation of what had paſſed in his conference with the Duke. He got home, and into his own room, unperceived—changed his dreſs, and took his uſual place in the office—heard he had not been inquired for, ſo found all was ſafe; and when his father came in, he was writing among the clerks.

The day was therefore ſpent in perfect harmony; and, in the evening, Bazile aſked his father which way he meant to walk?

Mr. de Melac was rather ſurprized at the queſtion, and begged to know what had induced him to make the inquiry?

He had not ſeen his grandmother lately, he ſaid, therefore would accompany him thither, with his leave, if he was going that evening.

Mr. de Melac was pleafed at the propofal, and faid he fhould be glad of his company—little gueffing the fecret fpring of Bazile's movements.

CHAP. VIII.

THE evening was warm, therefore they walked gently along under the trees which bordered the road, and were within fight of the village when the Duke, whom Bazile expected with impatience, came riding after them. Bazile caught fight of him firft, but took no notice, till his father made the fame difcovery.

His Grace alighted as foon as he rode up, and had afked Mr. de Melac and his fon how they did.

Bazile thought every ſecond an age while the Duke and his father mentioned the news of the day, and commented upon the weather. Eager to be relieved from his preſent ſtate of ſuſpenſe, he ſeized the firſt break in their diſcourſe to ſay, " I don't think there is a regimental in all France ſo becoming as your Grace's. Pray have you been long in the ſervice ?"

Mr de Melac gave him a look, thoroughly expreſſive of his diſapprobation of this abrupt and impertinent queſtion; but the Duke was too well acquainted with its cauſe to feel himſelf at all offended. Mr. de Melac had never made a ſimilar inquiry during the familiar converſations he had held with him, nor had his Grace happened to mention it himſelf; however, willing to oblige Bazile, and lead to the ſubject he ſeemed ſo anxious about, ſmiled and ſaid, " I have been a Colonel theſe five years, Mr. Bazile, but I entered the ſervice at fourteen, and begun my military career in the *Gens*

 d'armes

d'armes, under the command of my grand-father the Marechal de St. Frimin, allowed to be a very——"

At that moment the Duke felt himſelf ſeized by the arm by Mr. de Melac, who fixed his eyes ſteadfaſtly upon his face for about three ſeconds; during which time his colour all forſook his cheeks, and he ſeemed breathleſs, and unable to articulate a word, and muſt have fallen upon the ground, if the Duke (exceſſively alarmed, and who really thought him dying) had not caught him in his arms,—expecting every moment to ſee him a breathleſs corſe; but, though ſtill unable to ſpeak, Mr. de Melac was conſcious of the liberty he had taken, and made an effort to diſengage himſelf from the Duke's encircling arms, and to take hold of his ſon; but he would ſupport him, as being infinitely more able, he ſaid,—while he inquired very anxiouſly how he felt himſelf; and finding he did not recover, entreated him to ſit down upon a bank by the road

road ſide; then calling to his ſervant, who was ſlowly following with the horſes, deſired him to ride with all ſpeed to the neareſt houſe for a glaſs of water. His Grace then ſeated himſelf by Mr. de Melac's ſide, and made him lean his head againſt him.

Bazile was, during all this time, a mere ſpectatôr, and never ſpoke, or even offered to aſſiſt either in ſupporting or recovering his father: his fright, and the ſevere diſappointment he had experienced at ſuch a moment, had bereft him of all preſence of mind,—till the Duke, in an impatient tone, deſired him to looſe his father's neckcloth and ſhirt collar.

As they were very near the entrance of the village, the ſervant ſoon returned with the water; but Mr. de Melac had began to recover before he arrived: he drank part of it, and then aſſured the Duke he was much better."

Heaven be praiſed!" ſaid his Grace; "you don't know how you frightened me; but do ſit ſtill—you are not ſufficiently recovered to think of moving.

Bazile had now found his ſpeech, and aſked his father how he found himſelf; and what had occaſioned his illneſs?

"Pray poſtpone any further queſtions, Mr. Bazile," ſaid his Grace, "till your father is better able to anſwer them. In a few minutes we will lead him gently on towards the village."

In about ten minutes De Melac was ſufficiently recovered to be able to expreſs his gratitude for the evident intereſt the Duke took in his health, and aſſured him he was perfectly able to walk—endeavouring to riſe while he ſpoke.

The Duke and his ſon aſſiſted him; and taking an arm of each, they proceeded ſlowly

flowly along.—As he was now perfectly able to talk, the Duke afked him if he had ever been taken fo before?

"Never," faid De Melac, with a faltering voice—the natural refult of his recent fit; but confcious he was ftill very much agitated, he aid he had rather not go to Madame des Ormes immediately—his countenance would inform her fomething had been the matter with him, at which he knew fhe would be very much alarmed; he fhould therefore prefer going to the Bailliff's till he was quite recovered—entreating he might no longer intrude upon his goodnefs, fince his fon was with him.

"I muft fee you fafe houfed, my good friend," faid the Duke; I will then take a ride a few miles further, and call to fee how you do upon my return. "I really think you ought to be blooded;—but you muft be the beft judge of your own feelings.

 Their

Their arrival at the Bailliff's prevented Mr. de Melac from making any anſwer. This honeſt Flemand and his wife were very much ſhocked when they learned what had once more procured them the honour of their viſit. The Duke had often been uppermoſt in their thoughts, and often the ſubject of their diſcourſe ſince the fête; they highly recommended Mr. de Melac's precaution, and offered a vaſt many remedies for ſuch complaints. He drank a large tumbler of wine, and then entreated they would permit him to lie down upon one of their beds for half an hour; aſſuring them his illneſs aroſe from having eat ſomething at dinner which had diſagreed with him, or from the heat of the weather.

This they all readily believed; and the Duke having expreſſed his hopes that he ſhould find him much better when he returned, mounted his horſe, and rode off.

Bazile

Bazile accompanied his father into the Bailliffs' beſt apartment; but as ſoon as he was laid down, Mr. de Melac ſaid, as he ſhould try to take a little nap, he had rather be left alone; and Bazile, not ſorry to be thus diſmiſſed, haſtened into the garden, and began to reflect upon what would have been the conſequence, had his father been carried off in this ſtrange fit;—but theſe attacks might become frequent. He wondered whether they were paralytic or apoplectic, and which was the moſt ſpeedy forerunner of approaching diſſolution: the latter, he concluded, as his grandmother's head ſhook with the palſy, and ſhe was yet in very good health; yet he perſuaded himſelf he loved his father; ſtill, if it did pleaſe God to take him, why he ſhould the ſooner become his own maſter, and no longer be obliged to aſk his permiſſion to embrace a military life. What a fine thing, at his age, to be addreſſed *Mon Colonel*, as the Duke had been; but to add the title of *Monſeigneur* to ſuch an advantage, in his opinion,

opinion, was the *ne plus ultra* of human felicity; and to be able to ſay, as the Duke had done, almoſt at the moment his father was taken ill, "My grandfather, the Marechal de St. Firmin—what a noble ſound!"—Oh! how he longed to diſtinguiſh himſelf by his bravery and ſkill! brandiſhing a cane he had in his hand, then carrying it in ſtate as he had ſeen the Duke do his broad ſword, when he marched at the head of his men; however, he hoped very ſoon to be able to claim ſome relationſhip to him; and grew half a foot higher, in his own imagination, upon the ſtrength of ſo glorious an idea.

In the midſt of his exultation, he looked over the garden wall in a ſort of triumph, when he caught ſight of La Mere des Ormes—her head ſhaking more than uſual, hurrying towards the houſe: he ſhrunk back in an inſtant;—all the airy ſtructure he had been building fell to the ground: he gnaſhed his teeth, ſtruck his cane violently upon the

ground, blamed his father more than ever for having brought this filly, mean old woman from Rouen; and he had not vented his ſpleen, before this much-deſpiſed, though truly reſpectable grandmother came tottering towards him.

Some officious perſon had told her they had ſeen Mr. de Melac enter the Bailliff's houſe, ſupported by two gentlemen; and the ſhock the intelligence gave her (for had he been her own ſon ſhe could not have been more attached to Mr. de Melac) prevented her from ſetting out ſooner to make her anxious inquiries.

The Bailliff and his wife made her drink a glaſs of wine, which rather revived her drooping ſpirits, by repeating what Mr. de Melac had ſaid reſpecting his illneſs; adviſing her not to diſturb him, as a little reſt would moſt likely effect his cure.

She

She was of their opinion, ſo walked into the garden to learn the particulars of her ſon's diſorder.

Bazile was forced to approach her, and thought nothing was ſo tireſome as the garrulous queſtions of old age, nor no one ſo fond of prating as his grandmother. With difficulty he concealed his impatience, and aſſured her his father would be quite well when he got up;—the heat had overcome him, and what was there to alarm her or any body elſe in a diſorder that aroſe from ſo natural and ſo ſimple a cauſe? While he was thus *feelingly* expatiating upon his father's illneſs, Mr. de Melac joined them. He was ſtill very pale, and unuſually dejected; but, in anſwer to the kind old woman's inquiries, aſſured her he was very well,—though, by way of completing his cure, intended to ſleep at her houſe, as a little freſh country air would be of more ſervice to him than any medicines he could take; deſired

desired Bazile to return home, and let Madame de Franval and his sisters know his intentions, without mentioning his illness, as his countenance would have lost all traces of it by the morning.

Bazile did not much relish this commission; as his father was so well recovered, he was in hopes he should have found an opportunity, when the Duke returned, to turn the discourse upon the army, and his wish to enter the service. He knew there was no appeal from his father's orders, as they were always the result of reason, and found it utterly impossible to start any objections to this plan; he therefore set out upon his return.

His father had frequently slept at his grandmother's, but he had never been informed of it, till the family assembled at supper. This evening was his own.

As ſoon as he had given in his report to his ſiſters, and made ſome excuſes for not ſupping with the family, he thought he would ſpend the evening with his friend Berenger, impart his recent diſappointment, and take his advice how to repair this loſt opportunity.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE Duke returned in about an hour, alighted at the Bailliff's door, and went in to make his enquiries. Mr. de Melac was juſt going over to Madame des Ormes, and aſſured him, that he was infinitely better; then mentioned his intention of keeping the country that night.

"You are quite right, my dear ſir," ſaid the Duke; "but if you are not perfectly recovered in the morning, I muſt intreat you will ſend for the ſurgeon of my regiment, who is really a very clever man, and in whoſe hands I would freely truſt my life."

Mr.

Mr. de Melac tried once more to expreſs his gratitude; the Duke would not ſuffer him to proceed in that ſtrain; but when he took his hand to wiſh him a good night, he felt it tremble within his: their eyes met, and Mr. de Melac's countenance again betrayed ſymptoms of his recent diſorder. The Duke therefore apprehended him to be worſe than he really was; and after expreſſing a thouſand kind wiſhes for the re-eſtabliſhment of his health, he took his leave, and proceeded to Dunkirk.

Having made his enquiries concerning Bazile, whom he had no wiſh to ſee but in his father's preſence, he took a contrary road, that he might not be way laid. His Grace was engaged to ſup with the Officers of his own and the other regiments, which compoſed the garriſon, at the Hotel de Flanders; but when he reached his lodgings, he thought it poſſible Mr. de Melac might be worſe in the night, and felt himſelf ſo much intereſted in his recovery, that he deter-

mined to ſend him ſome advice before the gates were ſhut; and upon reflection, though he had a very high opinion of his own ſurgeon, thought Mr. de Melac might place greater faith in the ſkill of Mr. Vanval; beſides, they were old acquaintance; and this worthy man (for ſuch was the character Mr. de Melac always gave him) might be hurt if his friend employed any body elſe. He therefore went in ſearch of him—he was not at home; and his ſiſter, who anſwered the door, ſaid he had juſt been ſent for to a labour, where he would, moſt probably, be detained all night. As ſhe did not know the Duke, he left no meſſage, but determined to ſend his own ſurgeon, and write Mr. de Melac his reaſons for ſo doing: he was alſo from home. However at the laſt mentioned gentleman's he ſet down, and wrote a ſhort note to the Receiver General, in which he encloſed one to the ſurgeon, containing his inſtructions, and then proceeded to the Hotel de Flanders.

The party he went to meet were all aſſembled, and told his Grace when he went in

they

they began to think him late; the Duke ſaid he had been out of town, and had two or three places to call at ſince his return, and hoped he had not kept ſupper waiting. "Not a moment," ſaid one of the gentlemen; "as it is not yet ready, we have ſat down to *Vingt-un* to paſs away the time." The Duke inſtantly joined in play; but their mirth was interrupted by frequent burſts, nay, ſhouts of laughter, which iſſued from an adjoining room. Some of the company wiſhed to have ſilenced this riotous party; but the Duke interfered in their behalf, and inſiſted they might be permitted to amuſe themſelves their own way. "It would be very hard," he ſaid, "to deny any one a privilege they certainly had an equal right to enjoy." At laſt ſupper was brought in; the Duke aſked the waiter who theſe riotous gentlemen were in the next room.

"The Receiver General's ſon is giving a treat to his friends," was the anſwer.

"What, young Melac?" ſaid the Duke, unwilling to believe the waiter.

"The ſame, your Grace," ſaid the man.

The

The Duke's ſurpriſe was now viſible.

"Why, I ſaw that young fellow not more than three hours ago, two miles diſtant in the country.—"There are five beſides himſelf," ſaid the waiter; "they came in together about an hour and a half ago, and were in ſuch a hurry for their ſupper, they have put our cook into ſo great a buſtle, he will not be in a good humour again for a week."

Moſt of the gentlemen preſent laughed at the manner in which this was ſaid; but the Duke felt very much hurt to think the ſon of ſo excellent a man ſhould chuſe ſuch a moment to regale his friends.

Bazile had already lowered himſelf very much in his eſteem; but he was now convinced he muſt be totally devoid of filial affection, of courſe unworthy his notice. They had juſt finiſhed ſupper in the next room, when the Officers ſat down to their's; and as their noiſe increaſed every minute, they of

courſe

course became the ſubject of theſe gentlemen's converſation. One of them remarked ſome of the party ſpoke very bad French:

"There are three Engliſhmen among them," ſaid the waiter; "one of them is the Confeſſor to the Engliſh ladies."

"What, the Confeſſor of the Engliſh convent?" ſaid one of the Officers. "I met that fellow a few nights ago ſo drunk, I had a great mind to have ſent him to the guard-houſe; for it was ten o'clock, and he was without a light."

The waiter ſaid he was a merry ſoul, and loved the bottle dearly; he had frequently led him home; for he generally uſed their houſe, becauſe it was handy.

"I am glad the fellow has decency enough to try to conceal his failings," ſaid the Duke.—An abſolute ſhout of mirth, and "well done, Dominé," re-echoed by the whole party, now aſſailed their ears.

"What are they doing?" ſaid the Major of Huſſars.

"Making

"Making the prieſt fuddled, I fancy, ſir," ſaid the waiter.

"A very eligible employment," ſaid the Duke; "I hope for once they will be diſappointed."

"He is not a bad hand, your Grace; he can carry a pretty good quantity; but they contrive to make him drink two or three glaſſes to their one, and he is too fond of good liquor, he ſays, to diſpute the point with them."

The Duke was not in his uſual gay ſpirits; Bazile's evident want of feeling hurt him ſo much, that he could not join in a laugh at the expence of the follies of mankind: ſtill he never took upon himſelf the office of ſenior in any company; and ſome of the gentlemen preſent were old enough to have been his father; yet he ſtood ſo high in all their eſteem, his example was ſure to be followed; and by mutual conſent, they gave the converſation a different turn. His Grace was not fond of being out late, and it was near eleven

eleven o'clock before their ſupper was over; drinking, eſpecially to any degree of exceſs, is ſeldom, nay, hardly ever, encouraged among men of rank in France; therefore having aſſiſted in emptying a few bottles of champaign, the Duke roſe to take his leave, and his Major followed his example; when the door of their room was opened by an Engliſhman, who advancing a few ſteps, ſaid, in his own language, "Pray, gentlemen, is Mr. Bever here?" Finding he was not underſtood, he repeated his queſtion in French; but having caſt his eyes round, and looked particularly at the Duke, who was ſtanding very near him, he begged pardon for his intruſion, and was going to retire, when he received a ſlap on the ſhoulder, which fairly drove him forward againſt the Duke; and a perſon whoſe voice he perfectly recognized, ſaid, in broken Engliſh, "This way, and be d—d to you." His Grace raiſed his eyes, and met thoſe of Bazile de Melac, who was now ſtanding in the doorway. He was motionleſs for a few ſeconds, though

though infinitely too much in liquor to know or almoſt care what he either did or ſaid. The Duke, obſerving his ſurpriſe, ſaid, "Is this gentleman a friend of your's, Mr. Bazile?" He could not find in his heart to addreſs him by the name his father had rendered ſo reſpectable.

The ſtranger ſaid in French, he was come for Mr. Beaver.

"Go along, you ſtupid hound, and give orders for his funeral," ſaid Bazely, ſeizing the Duke by the arm with the utmoſt familiarity.

"Do pray come here, *mon Colonel*, and I will treat you with a ſight you have not ſeen this many a day."

"What is it?" ſaid the Duke, without making any reſiſtance.

"A dead man: we have juſt laid him out; his caſſock is as full as it can hold; and we are going to chaunt the *de profundis* over him with all due ſolemnity."

 This

This ſpeech was frequently interrupted by a drunken hiccup. Staggering towards the room he came out of, and ſtill holding the Duke, who being rather curious to take a ſurvey of this ſelect party, ſuffered himſelf to be dragged along in ſilence: the firſt thing he ſtumbled againſt was an empty bottle, which Bazile made a kick at, and would have fallen at his length, if the Duke had not ſaved him. The floor was covered with theſe ſtumbling blocks; which had been kicked from one to the other, till moſt of them were broken. The ſound of *your Grace*, with the appearance of a man, the whole party knew to be of ſuch rank and conſequence, aſtoniſhed them very much: but how Bazile came to be thus familiar with him; or how he dared to take ſuch liberties, none of them, Berenger excepted, who was of courſe one of the party, could poſſibly comprehend. The room was very long, and the Duke permitted his conductor to lead him to the upper end where, extended on a ſofa, Bazile expected to behold the

the prieſt, and was extremely mortified to perceive he had, by the waiter's aſſiſtance, made his eſcape. The Engliſhman, who came to protect Mr. Beaver, withdrew, rejoicing he had been ſaved from the profane rites this Bacchanalian crew were preparing to celebrate; and reproaching them for pouring ſo much wine down his throat, and warning them that they might one day feel the conſequence of ſuch drunken revels. This they were perfectly eaſy about, and perſiſted in declaring it would have been excellent ſport, could they have buried him but for a few hours. To have attempted to reaſon with them, the Duke knew would be madneſs, and therefore merely tried to diſengage himſelf from Bazile's graſp, wiſhing to make a ſpeedy retreat from ſuch a ſcene; but the reſt of the officers had followed him, and were highly diverted with the drunken chorus.—Thoſe ſitting round the table were rather howling than ſinging. Bazile, obſerving they were entertained, felt very much flattered, and told them *he* was

maſter of the ceremonies; hoped they would do him the honour to drink one glaſs with him—his friends joined in the intreaty, and the necks of two or three flaſks of ſparkling champaign were inſtantly knocked off, and tumblers put into each of the Officers' hands: not to affect ſingularity, the Duke followed his friends' example, and then made his eſcape with the Major. The Officers felt very much diſpoſed to ſerve thoſe of Bazile's party, who were able to ſtand, as *they* had done the prieſt; therefore took their ſeats among them. To have men of their rank in the army to honour him ſo far, put Bazile into ſuch excellent ſpirits, that he ſent for more wine, and puſhed the bottle about as long as he could either ſee, or ſpeak diſtinctly. When the Officers found they had accompliſhed their deſign, that is, made the company ſo drunk, they could ſcarcely either walk or ſpeak, they ſaid they muſt be going. Bazile promiſed to call in the morning, and pay the bill, and the whole party followed the Officers into the ſtreet, declaring they would

would fee them fafe home: it was now between one and two. The Officers, as foon as they arrived at the *Grande Place*, which was very near the hotel where they ftopt, took to their heels; their new friends were not able to follow them. The former had nothing to fear from the foldiers on duty, though they were without lights.

Officiers is always a fufficient anfwer to their *qui va là*.

Bazile and his party abufed the deferters for leaving them; and in fhort ftaggered about the ftreets in a manner fo diforderly, and made fo much noife as to occafion their being foon feized by a party of Huffars, and conveyed to the guard houfe.

CHAP. X.

ANY ſudden alarm or fright is ſure to bring a perſon, let them be ever ſo much in liquor, in ſome degree to their ſenſes; and Bazile no ſooner found himſelf in actual confinement, than he began to reflect upon the events of the evening. On his return to Dunkirk, he had gone directly home, and told his ſiſters his father would not return, but complained of a head-ache, which he made a pretext for retiring early; and by the aſſiſtance of the footman he got out privately, and haſtened to his rendezvous with Berenger, who had joined the Engliſh party, with whom they were both intimate. While waiting for Bazile, he was aſſiſting them to empty a bowl of punch at an obſcure convent in a back ſtreet, where he and Bazile generally

generally met; the latter took him apart as soon as he entered, and briefly related the occurrences of the afternoon. Berenger, as usual, saw every thing in the most favourable light, and asked him to join their party. To this Bazile readily agreed, as he wished to spend the evening jovially, he said; but immediately advised adjourning to some better house, where they should meet with something worth eating and drinking, and he would meet the whole set. So agreeable a proposal was sure to meet with general approbation.

Bazile concluded their evening as has already been related; and neither he nor his companions relished either their night's lodging, or the thoughts of appearing before the Commandant in the morning. They could not sleep: but as they recovered their reason, they began to communicate their thoughts to each other. Bazile was infinitely more afraid of this pretty freak's coming to his father's ears, than of any pu-

niſhment the Commandant might think proper to inflict; and the leaſt they had to dread was a fortnight's impriſonment. Theſe reflections ſoon ſobered him. What would his father ſay when he returned home, found he had been out all night, and was then confined for riotous behaviour? he muſt alſo diſcover where he had ſpent the evening, what his bill amounted to, &c. &c.: he was convinced he would never forgive him, for he was forced to acknowledge he could not have choſe a more unlucky or improper moment in which to play the fool.

And now how to extricate himſelf from this horrid dilemma, Old Vanval had neither the power, nor would have the leaſt inclination, was he to make his caſe known to him: the Duke de Civrac certainly could ſet him at liberty, as it was a party of his men had taken them into cuſtody; but an application to him might overturn all his other fine projects. However, neceſſity had no law, and he would willingly at that moment

ment have relinquiſhed all the hopes he had formed of entering the army to be releaſed from his preſent confinement. He conſulted with Berenger, who could deviſe no other plan ſo likely to procure their immediate liberation, for as the Duke had evidently been engaged in a ſimilar party, he would certainly have a fellow-feeling for him; it was merely a frolic that had been carried rather too far, make the moſt of it; and though the Duke had not ſtaid late, owing, moſt likely, to ſome other engagement, his friends had left the hotel with them, and ſome of theſe gentlemen he entertained he hoped would come forward to liberate them. But there was not ſufficient reliance to be placed upon this expectation; Bazile obſerved to Berenger, not one of the officers were with them when they were taken; and they might not be up before they were examined and even ſent to priſon: then there was ten chances to one whether they would chooſe it ſhould be known they had been of ſuch a party. In ſhort, he ſaw no real like-

 lihood

lihood of being relieved from the impending danger but by applying to the Duke, and intreating him either to releafe them, or to intercede in their behalf. Berenger was of his opinion; but advifed him not to be too humble, as he was fo foon, in all probability, to be related to him, he had infinitely better treat the whole as a joke.

If the Duke had not known of Monf. de Melac's illnefs, Bazile would not have been fo perplexed; however, the application muft be fpeedy, or he muft run the rifk, which would moft likely end in the certainty, of being fent to prifon. Having determined, therefore, to make this appeal to the feelings of the aforefaid gentleman, the next difficulty was, how to procure writing materials, and a meffenger to convey the important meffage; thefe were favours which might be refufed.

Daylight had juft began to peep into their dark cell, and they remained contemplating each

each others countenances, till Bazile caught fight of the ferjeant of the guard near their iron bars; he inftantly addreffed him, and afked when he thought they fhould be liberated?

"About that day month, he fuppofed, if this was their firft offence."

"This day month!" repeated the terrified Bazile, "I would not be found here at nine o'clock for the world! What will it coft to purchafe immediate liberty?"

"My Captain, the Count de Rochelambut, is not to be bribed, Sir; and the regiment de Civrac, young gentleman, both officers and foldiers, make it a point to do their duty."

"No doubt, my good friend; but I want to apply to your noble Colonel; will you undertake to carry him a letter from me?"

The ferjeant looked furprized; but prefumed Bazile muft be a man of fome confeqence to talk in this manner.

"If you are intimate with the Duke, Sir, he may certainly ſet you at liberty; no one elſe can; for the Commandant will order you to priſon the moment he hears why you were taken into cuſtody; and I don't think his Grace will be very ready to let you off, if he hears how you all behaved."

"My good friend, I am very intimate with the Duke," ſaid Bazile; and I am ſure he will do all in his power to ſerve me. Could you procure me a ſheet of paper and pen and ink to write a few lines to him? here is ſomething to make the purchaſe, ſlipping a ſix livre piece into his hand. I hope one of theſe days to be received into your honourable corps, and you may depend, in that caſe, upon my protection."

The ſerjeant found it impoſſible to withſtand ſo many weighty reaſons; he therefore promiſed to do all he dared to ſerve him, and very ſoon returned to the bars with pen, ink, and paper.

Having

Having agreed upon what they thought would be moſt proper, Berenger's back was turned into a writing deſk, and Bazile ſet to work. What a pity, the former obſerved, the Duke had not been taken up with them; what an infinite deal of anxiety and trouble it would have ſaved them, as he muſt have liberated them all.

About ſix o'clock the letter was finiſhed, and the ſerjeant was again applied to, and intreated to deliver it immediately. The ſoldier aſked, was he to have the Duke diſturbed? as he dared not aſk it but upon buſineſs of importance concerning the regiment, as he ſeldom roſe before eight o'clock; but in caſe of neceſſity he might be called at any time.

Bazile was again puzzled how to act; to have him diſturbed was a liberty he could not preſume to take; he was therefore obliged to ſay he did not wiſh to derange the Duke,

Duke, but begged he would give the letter to his valet de chambre, and defire him to deliver it the moment he went into his maf-ter's room. The ferjeant promifed to do as he defired, and fet off with the letter to wait for the valet's getting up.

Bazile was ftill doomed to pafs two hours longer in confinement and fufpence, and could not help entertaining fome very natu-ral fears that his letter might not at laft have the defired effect. His father might come home to breakfaft, in that cafe he would certainly difcover every thing; he therefore prayed very fervently he might even have a relapfe, if nothing elfe would keep him in the country. If he could but get home and into the office by nine o'clock, he did not care. Berenger tried to raife his fpirits, and prognofticated all would end well. As for the others they had not fo much to fear, therefore faid but little. His father would be angry, well, and what then?

He

He had been young himſelf, they ſuppoſed, before he was old. What, had he done more than nineteen young men out of twenty did daily? Why was there more harm in their ſupping at the hotel de Flanders than in the officers doing ſo? And who would venture to blame their conduct? Beſides, ſome of theſe gentlemen were orderly men, and they had joined them after ſupper; therefore, at all events, they were as much to blame as themſelves.

But you are to be acquainted with my father ſaid Bazile; ſome people ſuppoſe him very indulgent, but there is not a ſeverer man upon earth; and unfortunately he took it into his head, God knows why or wherefore, or whether it was not half affected may be doubtful, to fanit laſt night as we were taking a country walk; and he will fancy I had been rejoicing becauſe he was ill, if he hears where I ſpent the evening. They could not argue this point

with him, only regretted very much they had not Beaver with them, he would have got them off they were certain; however, their only remedy was patience; and each now tried to inſpire Bazile with hopes the Duke would break their fetters as ſoon as he learnt their misfortune.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THE Duke's valet was not ſtirring till ſeven: the ſerjeant then delivered the letter and meſſage, and gave him a deſcription of the young man that had ſent him: "he is very intimate with his Grace," ſaid the ſerjeant.

"If you come from the perſon, I ſuſpect," replied the valet, with an incredulous look, "it is the Receiver General's ſon; he has certainly been here once, but I don't believe he is among my maſter's friends; however, you may tell him I will deliver his letter as ſoon as his Grace's bell rings."

With this meſſage the ſerjeant returned. Bazile renewed his promiſe of future protection, and rewarded him with another half crown for his punctuality. And thus himſelf

felf and his friends remained in a ftate of the moft difagreeable fufpence, certain, however, that a very fhort time muft now decide their fate.

The Duke happened to ring his bell fooner than ufual; his valet went with the letter in his hand, which he prefented to his mafter as foon as he had undrawn the curtains, faying, "it was brought half an hour fince, and I was defired to give it your Grace the moment you were ftirring"

The Duke took the note, opened it, and began to read; but as it was not a very fhort one, he looked at the bottom before he got half way through it, and neither the fignature, ftyle, nor requeft pleafed him: it was infinitely worfe written than the one he had received the preceding morning from the fame perfon; but finding whom it came from, and already very angry with the writer, he felt himfelf particularly offended at his daring to take fuch a liberty; he therefore flung

flung the letter upon the bed, and began to riſe, in ſilence revolving in his mind what could have induced young Melac to addreſs him as an equal: he was certainly not ſober when he wrote.; and though he looked upon him as infinitely beneath his notice, ſtill, ſince he had the power, he was determined, to puniſh him for the ſhameful want of feeling he had diſplayed over night: his having choſen ſuch a moment for his revels, he could not forgive, as it was very poſſible, for any thing he knew to the contrary, his father lay at the point of death, while he was diſturbing a whole neighbourhood with his follies, and enjoying the chance he thought he had of becoming his own maſter. But the moment Monſieur de Melac's illneſs came acroſs his mind, he reflected he had ſeen him the preceding evening change, in the ſhort ſpace of a minute, from perfect health to apparently a lifeleſs corpſe. He ſtarted to think what might be the conſequence were his ſon's follies, not to give Bazile's actions a harſher

name,

name, to come to his ears: ſuppoſe he was recovered, it might bring on a relapſe, and in the other caſe would certainly increaſe his diſorder: humanity therefore ſoftened the rigour of juſtice, and without allowing himſelf time to debate the point any longer, he ſet out immediately for the guard-houſe; and without ſeeing any one of the priſoners, or having heard the charges brought againſt them, he gave orders to have them all ſet at liberty; but deſired the officer upon duty not to inform them to whom they owed their ſpeedy releaſe; acknowledging to him he was only actuated by his regard for the worthy Receiver General (who was univerſally eſteemed). He then returned home, determined neither to receive any more letters or viſits from Bazile, and never take the leaſt notice of him but in his father's preſence; and from that time he looked upon himſelf as no longer bound to promote the wiſh he had expreſſed to enter the ſervice, as he would not now, upon any terms, have received him into his own regiment.

Very

Very little paſt of courſe between the priſoners when the officer came to open the doors of their dungeon; it was ſo much ſooner than they had expected to hear from the Duke, that they did not even gueſs he was their liberator; no, ſome of the officers who had been in a great meaſure the cauſe of their confinement had procured their freedom. The enquiries they made were of no avail; and Bazile ſincerely wiſhed he had never diſpatched his letter. However, they all haſtened home, and Bazile took care to keep out of ſight of the windows; he had provided himſelf with the key of a private door; only one of the maid ſervants ſaw him come in, and as he was far from ungenerous among his father's houſehold, ſhe readily promiſed to keep the ſecret.

He learnt from this girl that Monſ. de Melac was not come home, and the ladies were not come down; his heart leapt for joy at this welcome intelligence. A very ſhort time ſufficed him to change his dreſs, and the

the head-ache he had complained of over night, and had made a pretext for his early retreat to bed, would account for his want of colour and hagged looks. He joined his ſiſters and Madame de Franval at the uſual hour in the breakfaſt room: they all expreſſed their ſorrow to ſee him look ſo indifferent, and Madame de Franval mentioned ſeveral remedies for the head-ache, which he choſe to attribute to the ſedentary life he led.

"Then I am ſure my father would never be free from it," ſaid Ermance; "for he frequently ſits twice as many hours in the day at his deſk as you do; beſides, I never heard you complain of it before." "The heat of the weather and over fatigue may have brought it on," ſaid Erneſtine; "perhaps you hurried home laſt night:" he agreed he had walked very faſt. As they were uncertain when Mr. de Melac would arrive, they waited to a late hour, and had not finiſhed breakfaſt when he came in; and as they all made the

the ufual enquiries, but as none of them mentioned his illnefs, he gave his fon a look of approbation: he feemed perfectly recovered; and as Bazile tried to look unufually pleafant, his excellent father was compleatly deceived, and in the kindeft accent obferved he did not look very well.

Erneftine immediately told the ftory of the head-ache, and mentioned its having obliged him to retire to bed much fooner than common.

Mons. de Melac, judging his fon after his own heart, folely attributed his altered looks to the uneafinefs *his* illnefs had given him; therefore forbore making any further enquiries into the nature of his complaint, only faid he hoped he would be better after breakfaft; and that a good night's reft would fet all to rights. While he was fpeaking the furgeon of the regiment de Civrac was announced. Bazile's wonted colour all revived, and as inftantly faded; for it is juftly faid a guilty confcience needs no accufer.

“ Shew the gentleman in,” ſaid Mons. de Melac. Bazile was the firſt who wiſhed to retire; but his father, gueſſing to whom he owed this viſit, deſired him to ſit ſtill, giving Madame de Franval a look at the ſame time, which ſhe perfectly underſtood, and retired with the young ladies by one door, as the ſurgeon entered by the other; he bowed very politely, and taking a letter from his pocket, preſented it to Mons. de Melac, ſaying, “ This, Sir, will, I believe, ſufficiently apologize, for my intruſion. I have been to Madame des Ames—you had not been gone more than half an hour, ſhe told me; and, by her direction, I followed you home.”

Mons. de Melac, in the politeſt terms, intreated him to ſit down, and expreſſed his regret at his having taken ſo much trouble; then begged to know if he had breakfaſted.

“ Will you do me the favour to take that meal with me, Sir?” The ſurgeon bowed, and Bazile was deſired to order freſh coffee.

Mons,

Mons. de Melac intreated the ſurgeon to walk into his ſtudy till it was ready. As ſoon as they were ſeated, he ſaid he had not been at home five minutes; the ſurgeon recollected having met him on the way; then ſaid, "Allow me, Sir, to expreſs the pleaſure I feel to ſee you look ſo well this morning; I was unfortunately out of the way laſt night, or I ſhould have paid you an earlier, or perhaps I ought to ſay, a later viſit, by the orders of my commander, as your family ſurgeon was particularly engaged; and as he was not at liberty when I made my enquiries this morning, I proceeded to Madame des Omes, in obedience to the inſtructions I had received; but his Grace's note will explain the reaſon of my viſit better than I can."

"The Duke does me infinite honour, Sir," ſaid de Melac, "to intereſt himſelf ſo much, and ſo kindly in my health and welfare;" breaking the ſeal, and beginning to read as follows:

"*My dear Sir,*

"As Mr. Vanval is engaged with Madame la Commandante, and not likely to be at leiſure this evening, I have taken the liberty to order Mr. Bertrand, in whoſe ſkill I place implicit confidence, and for whom I have the higheſt eſteem, to offer you his ſervices upon the preſent occaſion; in hopes you will conſult with him about the alarming complaint that ſeized you a few hours ago. I would have introduced him in perſon, could I have found him in time; but I have an engagement which obliges me to relinquiſh that pleaſure; ſo pray let me hear how you really are from my friend when he returns; and believe me with the trueſt regard and eſteem,

Your's,

De Civrac."

This was the note the Duke had left at the ſurgeon's over night.

A degree of agitation ſimilar to what he had

had felt the preceding evening, again ſeized him, which he did all in his power to conceal; but Mr. Bertrand, who ſat remarking, with ſome aſtoniſhment, the different changes in his countenance, began to think there was ſomething rather uncommon in his complaint? As the letter, of which he was the bearer, contained nothing likely to affect him, he therefore began to think Mons. de Melac either very nervous, or that his diſorder aroſe from ſome ſecret cauſe. Upon looking up, de Melac caught the ſurgeon's eyes upon him, and, fearful his looks had betrayed his feelings, ſaid, "The Duke's kindneſs really overpowers me, and I never was more at a loſs to expreſs or define the ſentiment he inſpires me with: the word gratitude falls ſo very ſhort of my feelings, I muſt expunge it from my vocabulary upon this occaſion."

"I am really equally at a loſs to know how to thank you, Mr. Bertrand, as I ought for the trouble you have taken upon my account."

 "I am

"I am only very ſorry, Sir, I was not to be found when there was ſome chance of my being of any ſervice; I ſpent the evening at an old friend's, and did not return home till paſt ten, when I found that letter lying upon my table, incloſed in one from his Grace, containing his wiſhes and inſtructions. I was therefore going to ſet off for Madame des Omes immediately, meaning to make uſe of his Grace's name to get out of the town, when I was ſent for to the Military Hoſpital; two of our ſoldiers had fallen out, and, in deciding their quarrel, one of them received a moſt terrible wound with a broad ſword; and before I was able to leave the poor creature, the Duke joined me there; having heard of the accident, he wiſhed to ſee the man before he returned. Of courſe I mentioned what had been my intentions reſpecting you, Sir; and his Grace adviſed me not to think of diſturbing you at ſo late an hour, which, he obſerved, was not very likely to accelerate your cure. He therefore deſired me to make

make further enquiries early this morning concerning Mr. Vanval; and if he was ſtill detained, to wait upon you in his ſtead; and I have obeyed his orders in every particular; and I was in hopes, when I firſt came in, you was not in need of my advice; but I begin to fear you are not ſo well recovered as your friends could wiſh.

De Melac was convinced this ſkilful man was not to be put off with the ſame excuſes his other friends had been. After a ſmothered ſigh, he ſaid, " I certainly find myſelf much better this morning, Mr. Bertrand; yet I know it would be both abſurd and vain to attempt to deceive you into a belief that I am quite well: my laſt night's illneſs aroſe from a latent cauſe, never, I fear, totally to be removed.

The warm terms in which the Duke de Civrac ſpeaks of you, convinces me, Sir, I am addreſſing a man of honour: the faintneſs which ſeized me ſo ſuddenly, and which probably

probably the Duke mentioned, was occasioned by a momentary thought that ſtruck me of a ſomething that was within the bare chance of probability—ſome recent remarks that had been made ſtrengthened my ſurmiſe—but I find I am talking nonſenſe, and you will ſoon, with juſtice, think you will have to preſcribe for the diſorder of my brain.—We are ſtrange mortals, Mr. Bertrand, and hardly at times know what we ſay or do.—I wiſh his Grace had not witneſſed—De Melac made a ſudden pauſe, as if aware he was going to ſay more than he intended, and thus proceeded, " he ſeems ſo feelingly alive to the diſtreſſes and complaints of others, it is almoſt a pity he ſhould ever be expoſed to witneſs the common caſualties that ſo frequently happen.

" Few men poſſeſs ſuch unbounded, ſuch univerſal philanthrophy, Sir," ſaid the ſurgeon; but you muſt endeavour to ſhake off your complaint: with all our boaſted ſkill we

we have not yet been able to find a remedy for the diſorders of the mind. You have very lately returned from a warm climate, I underſtand; and a long reſidence in the Weſt Indies is very apt to enervate the frame; and, as Voltaire very juſtly ſaid upon a ſimilar occaſion, addreſſing his phyſician, "*Gare la tempête, malade d'eſprit la reſſent.*

De Melac found he had raiſed the ſurgeon's curioſity more than he intended; and, by way of putting ſome check to his enquiries, ſaid, "I have reſided abroad full one half of my life, Mr. Bertrand; and I am not yet five and forty; and when I told you my illneſs proceeded from a latent cauſe, believe me, it aroſe from nothing I need be aſhamed to acknowledge; though pride ſometimes induces us to conceal in our own boſoms many things which might, were they to be revealed, afford great, nay perhaps inſtantaneous relief to the mind. What I alluded to only concerned myſelf, and I ſpoke without thinking; you will therefore particularly

particularly oblige me in not taking notice of my expreffions to his Grace, whom, I prefume, you will fee in the courfe of the morning; but pray tell him how fenfibly affected I am by his kindnefs; and that I will do myfelf the honour of perfonally returning my thanks for all the trouble he has taken upon my account, as early as I think it may be convenient to him, confiftent with his military duties, to which I know he pays the ftricteft attention.

The furgeon affured Mons. de Melac he might depend upon his difcretion.

"You have not been long acquainted with his Grace, I think, Sir?" added he.

"I have only enjoyed that honour fince his arrival at Dunkirk," faid de Melac; "but I have an infinitely higher efteem for him than I ever felt for any man of his rank I was ever yet acquainted with; and I was formerly in habits of intimacy with many; and

have

have even latterly had the honour of being particularly noticed by ſeveral of the great men of the day, the Miniſters, I mean."

"I am not at all ſurpriſed at your predilection in favour of his Grace. He is univerſally eſteemed and beloved; he looks upon every good man as his equal; and his hand and heart are ever open to diſtreſs. He always thinks his frequent viſits to our hoſpital contributes to the cure of the ſick ſoldiers; and I am perfectly of his opinion; for what can be ſo flattering to people in their ſituation as the attention of ſuch a man? I am convinced he would not have gone to reſt ſatisfied with himſelf, if he had not ſeen the poor fellow I mentioned juſt now, who met with the accident laſt night, and who is not naturally a quarrelſome man; and I am ſure he thought more of his Colonel's anger than of the wound he had received; but after he had ſpoke to him, and aſſured him of his forgiveneſs, the poor man was comparatively cured, and infinitely more

eaſy,

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARAS

eaſy, I am certain. His Grace ſaid, his folly had brought its own puniſhment with it, and left nothing for him to do, but to exhort him to compoſe his ſpirits, and try to get well again as faſt as he could."

He then mentioned ſeveral anecdotes of the Duke, which did him the higheſt honour; and concluded by the warmeſt and moſt heartfelt panegyrick Mons. de Melac had ever heard beſtowed upon one of any rank or ſtation. He ſat liſtening with the utmoſt delight till breakfaſt was announced. Bazile had remained in the parlour, but had taken every opportunity during the abſence of the ſervants to approach the door that ſeparated the two rooms, and applying his ear to the key-hole to liſten whether any thing paſt and relative to him or his nightly adventurers; as for the praiſes of the Duke, he was tired of liſtening to them, though they were a more agreeable theme juſt then, than his own follies would have been; and,

when

when his father and Mr. Bertrand joined him, he met the eyes of the former with tolerable aſſurance during breakfaſt.

The ſurgeon adviſed Mons. de Melac to have frequent recourſe to a few ſimple remedies to prevent a return of his fainting fits, and explained their uſual cauſes. De Melac promiſed to follow his preſcriptions, and between eleven and twelve the ſurgeon took his leave.

CHAP. XII.

As foon as Mr. de Melac was alone, he took out the Duke's note, and read it once more with the utmoft attention. How few people would have taken the fame trouble about him as he had done, and upon fo fhort an acquaintance! His fon's looks convinced him how much his reft had been broke by his uneafinefs, elfe he thought he might have fent for Vanval; but he reflected, this want of attention proceeded from the natural heedleffnefs of youth, and condemned himfelf for having fometimes accufed him of want of feeling, perfuading himfelf he had as much reafon to be fatisfied as moft other parents had, with the conduct of his children.

His

His recent agitation, and the various reflections which came acroſs him, prevented him from ſettlimg to any thing; it was too ſoon to pay his viſit to the Duke, who would be with his regiment till noon; he was going to join his daughters, when his old friend Vanval came buſtling in. From the deſcription his ſiſters had given, as ſoon as he went home, of the officer that had been enquiring for him over night, he gueſſed it was the Duke de Civrac; he therefore haſtened to his lodgings, and underſtanding he was upon the parade, followed him thither, and joined the ſpectators till his Grace was at liberty to ſpeak to him; he then learned what had occaſioned his over-night's viſit, and how he had acted in conſequence of not having found him at home; then expreſſed his joy to perceive Mr. de Melac's cure completed before his arrival; and proceeded to tell him Madame la Commandante was ſafely delivered of a daughter. However, having ſeriouſly enquired into the nature of his friend's complaint, which de Melac aſſured

aſſured him was very trifling, and no longer worth thinking about, he haſtened to viſit his other patients; and de Melac, having chattered a little while with his daughters, dreſt and ſet out for the Duke's lodgings. He was walking down a large gateway that led into the ſtreet, when he heard one of his ſervants who had preceded him to the *porte cochére*, or folding gates, to anſwer a knock, ſay, "Young Mr. de Melac is in the office, give it me."

"No," ſaid the ſtranger, "I was ordered to deliver it into his own hands,"

De Melac made a ſudden ſtop cloſe behind the ſervant, wondering what this was that could not be entruſted to the ſervant; a tall thin youth, who had made the enquiry, was ſtanding with a folded paper in his hand, which he tried to conceal the moment he caught ſight of Mr. de Melac. What could his ſon be engaged in, that ſeemed to require ſo much myſtery, and which it was evidently not

deſigned

designed he should be made acquainted with? "What does that young man want?"

"Nothing, Sir," said the lad, "I only wished to speak to Mr. Bazile, but another time will do," and was turning from the door.

De Melac's curiosity increased, and he called out, "Stop, Sir, and give me that paper, I will deliver it to him."

"I have no paper for him, I only ——"

De Melac repeated his demand in a tone that convinced the youth he chose to be obeyed, putting out his hand while he spoke.

The lad, in great confusion, did as he desired, saying, "it is not for Mr. Bazile, Sir; indeed I hardly know who it is for, because there are several more; indeed that was what I wanted to ask him."

"Very well," said de Melac, opening the paper,

paper, and feeing the name of Mr. Bazile de Melac at the top, " pray," faid he, " how came my fon's name to be annexed to this account, for fuch I perceive it to be, if it was neither for him nor me? Where did you come from?"

" L'hotel de Flanders, Sir," faid the lad.

" Very well," faid de Melac, " I fuppofe you are right; at all events you may leave your bill."

The man bowed, and retired; and de Melac, turning to the fervant, who had waited the refult of the conference in filence, faid, " Don't take any notice of what has paft to my fon," and returned into the houfe with the bill in his hand.

The footman, who was the very perfon that had connived at Bazile's efcape overnight, wifhed he had known the waiter, or taken the paper; but he had not been aware his mafter was fo clofe upon his heels: poor Bazile, faid he to himfelf, you will be blown

at

at laſt I am afraid, gueſſing this was the bill which had been left unpaid, and knowing French innkeepers are not fond of giving long credits. He wiſhed very much to give Bazile a hint of the impending ſtorm; but if Mr. de Melac ſhould diſcover it, which he moſt likely would from either Bazile's looks or words; he would moſt probably loſe his place; and he even in ſome reſpects dreaded an explanation's taking place, knowing he had let Bazile out, and told his ſiſters and Madame de Franval, by his deſire, that he was gone to bed; he therefore thought it moſt prudent to let matters take their own courſe, and to leave Bazile to get out of his ſcrape as well as he could.

Mr. de Melac returned into his ſtudy to examine the contents of the bill mere accident had thrown into his poſſeſſion, and was amazed when he ſaw the date, inſtantly concluding that was a miſtake; yet Bazile's having gone to bed ſo *apropos*, and his looks tending to ſuſpicions, he was deter-

determined ſoon to have them realized; yet could not perſuade himſelf his ſon would have choſen ſuch a moment for a merry-making. However, he began to read—ſupper for ſix, at three livres ten ſous each, one-and-twenty livres.—Seven bottles of English porter, ſeven livres—four bottles of common wine, ſix livres—nine of Chambert in Burgundy, forty-five livres—and fourteen of ſparkling champaign, eighty-four livres—broken glaſs, bottles, &c. five livres;—total, a hundred and ſixty-four livres.

De Melac was half petrified after he had examined the contents. Was it poſſible ſix people could have drank ſuch a quantity of liquor! What a fine drunken party it ſeemed to have been! and Bazile had certainly officiated as maſter of the ceremonies, by his having taken upon himſelf to pay the bill. He dared not truſt himſelf to talk with him about it juſt then; indeed he determined to make farther enquiries before he entered upon the ſubject. His daughters and Ma-

dame

de Franval he was convinced were not in the ſecret; and ſince Bazile had a method of going out privately of nights, this was not the firſt time, he imagined, he had been engaged in ſimilar frolicks.

Having rather removed his firſt emotion, he ſet out once more for the Duke's, determined to proceed from thence to the Hotel de Flanders. When he reached the Duke's apartments, he was not come home, but was expected every minute. De Melac was going away, when the valet came running down, and entreated he would walk in; his Grace told him he ſhould be in ſoon after twelve, and had ordered him, ſhould Mr. de Melac call before that time, to entreat he would do him the favour to wait his return. De Melac readily conſented, and was ſhewn into the dreſſing room.

The ſervant had hardly had time to retire, before de Melac heard two people talking in the adjoining apartment, the door between

tween the two rooms being rather upon the jar; one of them ſaid, "Poh! nonſenſe, 'tis only René I tell you, and he is gone out again." The other choſe to be ſatisfied, therefore took a haſty peep into the dreſſing-room, which de Melac obſerved in a large glaſs he ſat oppoſite to, without being ſeen by the ſervant, as the door ſhaded him when quite open. He did not ſit unuſually quiet, but the noiſe the ſervants made prevented them from hearing him, being in a great buſtle putting the room to rights before his Grace's return, began by making the bed, curſing the clock for being ſo faſt, and blaming each other for being out of the way; when one of them ſaid, "what is this? Oh, one of his Grace's love letters; I muſt ſee what it contains."

"I am ſure it is nothing of any conſequence, by its being left here," ſaid the other; throw it down, let us make haſte, or he will be at home before we have half done."

Curioſity got the better of her partner's

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inclination to work, and ſhe was determined upon examining the letter; having looked at the bottom, it is not from a lady however, and it is ſigned B. de Melac.

"Who the devil is that?" ſaid the other. "That's what I want to know?"

This preamble fully arreſted de Melac's attention. Was it poſſible his ſon could be in habits of correſpondence with his Grace! He ſat very quiet in hopes of hearing more, and was not diſappointed.

The ſervant who had found the letter, began to read aloud for the benefit of his companion. De Melac loſt ſome part of the contents, but heard very plainly, "After "your Grace left us we ſallied forth, meaning to go home; it might be between one "and two this morning; but happening "to laugh rather too loud, and ſay ſomething in ſport to a party of your men, who "were patroling the ſtreets, they inſtantly "ſeized

" ſeized and conveyed us to their guard-
" houſe, where we ſtill remain, and are in-
" formed we ſhall be carried before the Com-
" mandant as ſoon as he is up, and perhaps
" ſent to priſon for a mere innocent frolic,
" if your Grace's wonted generoſity does not
" prompt you to ſtand our friend upon the
" occaſion."

Here the reader ſtopped to comment upon the freedom of the ſtyle, and ſaid, this B: de Melac muſt be a man of conſequence, though they neither of them recollected the name. This is the letter the ſerjeant brought before any of us were up this morning; I would lay my life upon it—ten to one it is. I wonder whether his Grace releaſed them from their confinement, for I am ſure he was never caught ſtrolling in the ſtreets at ſuch an hour.

So, thought Mr. de Melac, this was the way this jovial party concluded their evening; and no longer wondered the bill had

been left unpaid. But the words "after your Grace left us," ſtruck him very forcibly. Was it poſſible the Duke could be amongſt them? He looked over the bill, but that did not ſatisfy his curioſity; that only told him ſix people had ſupped at the hotel de Flanders. From what Mr. Bertrand had ſaid, the Duke was at the military hoſpital between eleven and twelve, and had mentioned having an engagement upon his hands, in the note he had received from the ſurgeon, therefore he certainly was not of the party; he would not have lowered himſelf ſo much. Yet there was ſomething in all this he could not fathom; there was no other perſon of the name of Melac at Dunkirk. The letter, being upon the bed, tallied with the date of the bill. From what the ſervant had ſaid, it had been brought very early from the guard houſe and delivered to the Duke, he ſuppoſed, before he was up; therefore his ſon certainly had ſeized the opportunity *his* illneſs had afforded him to get drunk at a tavern, and then make

make a riot in the ſtreets. Wiſhing to hear more, he was almoſt afraid to breathe, when he heard one of the ſervants ſay, "Lay it down, lay it down, here is the Duke;" and the door between the two rooms was inſtantly ſhut. In a very few ſeconds his Grace entered by the other, and inſtantly addreſſing de Melac ſaid, "You don't know how happy I am, my dear friend, to ſee you thus well recovered." His countenance gave ſtrength to his words. De Melac's varied ſo much during his kind addreſs, that he added, with leſs vivacity, "I am afraid I was too haſty in my concluſions; ſit down: why did you come out, at leaſt in the middle of the day? For all what you once ſaid, I don't think the climate of Flanders agrees with you. I wiſh you had been placed at Dijon."

De Melac attempted to thank his Grace, but he would not liſten to him.

"I am perfectly acquainted with what you wiſh to ſay. Bertrand repeated the kind and

and polite things you ſaid to him this morning, ſo think no more of a trivial ſervice I looked upon in ſome reſpect as my duty, for I certainly only followed the golden rule. So now tell me very ſeriouſly how you find yourſelf, and how you like my friend Bertrand ?"

"I am really infinitely better your Grace, and determined to follow Mr. Bertrand's preſcriptions, of whom I have already formed a very high opinion."

The Duke ſeemed pleaſed, and expatiated very warmly upon his ſkill and humanity.

De Melac acquieſced in theſe juſt praiſes, and mentioned what had paſſed between them reſpecting the wounded ſoldier; adding, "though he was very ſorry for the poor fellow's misfortune, he was very glad Mr. Bertrand had been prevented from taking ſuch a diſagreeable ride to Madame des Ormes at ſuch a time of the night."

"I believe the Flemiſh beer," ſaid the Duke ſmiling, "is too potent for the heads of my ſoldiers; they are more accuſtomed to wine. As I flatter myſelf none of them are given to drinking, a ſmall quantity is ſufficient to intoxicate them; and ſome people, when in liquor, are very quarrelſome; even the beſt tempered men in the world and moſt prudent at other times, often act abſurdly."

"Your remark is very juſt," ſaid de Melac, detremined to ſeize this opportunity to diſcover, if poſſible without appearing impertinent, what the Duke knew of his ſon's indiſcretion; he therefore took out the bill, preſenting it to him.

"I don't think your Grace's ſoldiers drank near ſo much as any of the ſix gentlemen who compoſed that party; though God forbid I ſhould judge any one wrongfully; ſome of them may be very ſober men; I only wiſh I could ſuppoſe my ſon was among that number."

The

The Duke caſt his eyes over the paper, and wondered how de Melac came by it, and found his endeavours to conceal Bazile's ſhameful want of feeling had proved abortive. Not chuſing for various reaſons to expreſs his diſapprobation, he continued, "I hope none of theſe gentlemen have afforded employment for a ſurgeon; though I rather ſuppoſe they made a few falſe ſteps in their way home."

"No doubt, Sir; though I am ſtill ignorant of the reſult of this jovial meeting, the knowledge of which fell in my way accidentally."

Both the Duke and de Melac were equally embarraſſed; the former, afraid of lowering Bazile, conſequently of ſpeaking his real thoughts; the latter hardly dared give way to his curioſity, or expreſs his diſpleaſure from uncertainty whether the Duke was not among thoſe he ſo juſtly thought deſerving of cenſure. Unwilling to give his opinion of Bazile's conduct, his Grace ſaid, "You

have not ſeen your ſon, I preſume, Sir, ſince that bill has been in your poſſeſſion?"

"I have not, your Grace; nor could any thing ſhort of ſuch a convincing proof have induced me to believe he would have choſen laſt night for his revels."

"He is very young, my dear Sir, and it may have been an engagement of long ſtanding."

"I wiſh I was of that way of thinking; but he certainly did not know till very late in the evening I ſhould ſleep out of town; and I always expect to ſee him at ſupper, or to know where, or with whom he is engaged. He knows I am never averſe to his joining any proper party."

"Then let us put the moſt favourable conſtruction upon his behaviour," ſaid the Duke with a good natured ſmile, "and ſuppoſe he tried to drive away ſorrow; no very unuſual thing, though not always an effectual remedy."

"You are too good," ſaid de Melac, convinced now he was not among his

ſon's

ſon's gueſts; indeed it was ſo very unlikely, that before he hardly gave the idea a moment's ſerious conſideration.

"Whatever might be his reaſon for acting thus fooliſhly, I ſhall take ſome effectual method to prevent his ſpending ſo much money in future at a tavern. He certainly may, nay, ſhall, find out ſome other means of getting rid of his allowance. But I muſt go to the hotel de Flanders, as I am very curious to learn the names of his thirſty companions."

"Then I believe I have it in my power to ſatisfy you in that reſpect without your taking ſo much trouble, my dear friend.

De Melac looked at his Grace; his firſt, and what he deemed unlikely ſuſpicions, all revived, and he wiſhed very much he could have recalled his laſt words.

The Duke, unwilling to keep him in ſuſpence, immediately told him where and with

whom he had fupped; how he had learned his fon was in the fame houfe; who was of Bazile's party; and what had induced him to go into their room; concluding with entreating he would look upon the whole as a youthful frolic, which, he had no doubt, had been carried far greater lengths than was at firft intended; and hoped that reflection would induce him to forgive the fhare his fon had taken in it.

"Would to Heaven," faid de Melac, that Prieft may feel the effects of his folly for this month! Till now I always thought the Englifh catholics infinitely more ftrict than thofe of any other nation."

"They are in general fo, but Mr. Bever, I muft allow, is an exception to the rule; for, in my opinion, he was more reprehenfible than any of the party,"

"There I agree with your Grace; but you don't know, as you left them fo early, what time they broke up?"

"I have been informed ſince, to be very honeſt with you, they have already been very ſeverely puniſhed for their folly; they ſpent the night in confinement; and I received a petition this morning to liberate them, which I did between eight and nine, with a view, I muſt confeſs, of keeping you in ignorance of what, I cannot ſay, exactly met my approbation. Nay, now I ſee, my good friend, you are ſecriouſly angry with your ſon. I will allow I thought him at the time, and do now in ſome reſpects, to blame; and wiſh moſt ſincerely he had choſen any other time to play the fool; but if he bears any reſemblance to his excellent father, the greateſt puniſhment you can inflict upon him will be, to call at the hotel de Flanders in your way home, diſcharge the bill, and leave him to diſcover what you have done; his own reflections will be of more ſervice to him, in ſuch a caſe, than any thing you could either ſay or do.

The tears ſtood in de Melac's eyes; he replied in a voice ſcarcely articulate, "I will follow your advice, my noble friend."

The Duke took his hand, and while his count nance expreſſed the moſt tender concern, ſaid, "I can't bear to ſee you thus affected, my worthy, my amiable friend; conſider his age; believe me you will find him all you can wiſh in a very few years; your prayers, and more eſpecially your example, will ſoon reform the preſent errors in his conduct.

De Melac's eyes met thoſe of the Duke's, which beamed with heartfelt ſenſibility, and gliſtened while endeavouring to cheer the ſpirits of this excellent father: his hand trembled, and the tears, no longer to be reſtrained, rolled down his cheeks. Totally unable to ſpeak, he would have retired, but the Duke prevented him, ſaying, "We muſt not part thus, you ſhall ſit down, and endea-

your

vour to compoſe your agitation, and drink a glaſs of wine by way of raiſing your ſpirits.

De Melac could not refuſe to do honour to this freſh proof of his Grace's attention, and ſoon after took his leave, proceeded immediately to the hotel de Flanders, paid the bill without aſking a ſingle queſtion, and returned home, determined not to mention the matter to his ſon.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

MR. de Melac went into the office as foon as he reached his own houfe; found Bazile very bufy; and not having the leaft fufpicion of what had happened, affected an air of concern when his father entered, and afking in a tone he endeavoured to render plaintive, how he found himfelf. Of all the vices he could have been guilty of, Mr. de Melac had the greateft averfion to hypocrify; yet confiftently with the determination he had formed, he could not juft then take any notice of his fon's endeavours to impofe upon him; yet his countenance no longer bore the fame marks of approbation it had done at breakfaft; and making Bazile a fhort anfwer, he feated himfelf at one of the defks, and

and began to inſpect ſome accounts he wiſhed to have in readineſs for the farmer general, who was daily expected at Dunkirk. Every trifle alarmed the culprit.—What could have put his father out of humour! Perhaps he had not found the Duke at home, or had met with a cool reception; for if he had heard any thing about him, he would not have ſat down to examine what the clerks had been about before he had taken him to taſk, and pretty ſeverely.

Notwithſtanding this fancied ſecurity, he was remarkably diligent, and met the family at dinner with forced ſmiles; was particularly attentive to every word which fell from his father's lips; who on his ſide forced himſelf to behave to him as uſual, though his over officiouſneſs, and different changes of countenance, did not eſcape his penetrating eyes. Soon after coffee, having previouſly, contrary to his general rule, aſked his father if he ſhould want him during the courſe of the afternoon, and received a very cool negative

gative to his demand. He ſet out upon his rambles, meaning to call firſt and pay the bill, and then to proceed to Berenger's to enquire how he and his other companions had eſcaped, and whether his maſter or their fathers had any ſuſpicion where they had ſpent the night.

His firſt viſit, therefore, was to the Hotel de Flanders. The maſter, a true Flamand, who had made a fortune in his buſineſs, was ſitting ſmoaking his pipe in his court-yard; neither moved nor touched his hat when Bazile approached him; (indeed it would have been as much as he could have done for the Duke de Civrac) and upon his ſaying "I am come to pay for our ſupper, Sir," looked at him from head to foot in ſome ſurprize; then taking his pipe out of his mouth, ſaid, "You need not give yourſelf the trouble, Mr. Bazile, 'tis already paid for." This was ſo truly agreeable a ſurpriſe, Bazile aſked no further explanation; only ſaid, "Very well," and haſtened to his friend

friend Berenger, reflecting who could have been ſo obliging.

"Not the laſt mentioned gentleman, he was pretty ſure."

Bever next came acroſs him; but he reflected he could hardly ſpare enough to keep himſelf in powder, pomatum and bands; and that he now ſported a caſſock that had belonged to his predeceſſor; and was beſides in every body's debt. The other three were ſtill leſs capable.

Berenger, however, would moſt likely be able to ſet his mind at eaſe; but he was even more ſurprized than Bazile had been, and ſaid it muſt have been ſettled by ſome of the officers; and, at all events, what did it ſignify who had been ſo obliging?

Bazile declared he would know whom he ought to thank. They returned together to the tavern; when, in anſwer to their earneſt enquiries, the landlord, with the utmoſt

moſt ſang froid, ſaid, " Gentlemen, Mr. de Melac ſettled it."

" My father!" ſaid Bazile, motionleſs with horror and diſmay at an anſwer he ſo little expected.

" Yes, Sir," ſaid the Flemiſh landlord; " I know of no other of that name in Dunkirk.

" But how came he to know I was here laſt night? What did he ſay? When was he here?"

" My wife took the money; and I neither know nor care what paſt; only wiſh you would allow me to finiſh my pipe in peace."

They walked away, but Bazile was obliged to lean upon his friend's arm; and the moment they were in the ſtreet, exclaimed, in a doleful tone, " What muſt I do? I ſhall never hear the laſt of this! and may depend upon being obliged to ſpend my evenings at home for this twelvemonth."

" When did you laſt ſee your father?" ſaid Berenger.

" I left

"I left him in the ſaloon playing at back-gammon with Clemence."

"Well, and do you ſuppoſe he would not have told you of it?" ſaid the friend: "I would lay any wager, from the landlord's behaviour, ſome of the officers ſettled the account, and deſired the fellow to tell you it was your father, in order to frighten you."

A ray of hope darted acroſs Bazile's mind. This was very poſſible; for what could have induced his father to have remained ſilent about ſuch an affair, if he was acquainted with it; he would never have loſt ſo good an opportunity of reprimanding him. Berenger aſſured him ſuch forbearance was not in Mr. de Melac's character; therefore he had certainly nothing to fear. Thus encouraged Bazile's ſpirits, returned; he went home early, and ſoon drew Clemence, who was ſtill, nay always his confident in any thing that concerned his family affairs, on one ſide, and aſked her if ſhe had heard their father mention having been at the Hotel de Flanders,

Flanders, or having paid any bill for him. She wiſhed very much to find out to what he alluded; but Bazile evaded all her enquiries, and ſoon perceived ſhe knew nothing about the matter: at all events, therefore, he concluded the Duke, (whom he had ſat down in his own mind for rather a proud man, fearful of lying under any obligation to people ſo much his inferiors,) had ſettled the bill, and ſet them at liberty; but not chuſing to afford them an opportunity of returning him thanks, had done this privately; he was perfectly ſatisfied with the ſolution of this puzzling enigma. He appeared in high ſpirits at ſupper, and attributed Mr. de Melac's abſence of mind and unuſual thoughtfulneſs to the remains of his illneſs: he communicated his concluſions next day to Berenger, who confirmed him in this opinion, and who adviſed him to follow the Duke's example, and conſign the whole ſilly buſineſs to oblivion.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

NO one could be more diligent than Bazile for the ensuing four days; if he did venture out, it was for an hour in an evening, when he knew his father was safe. On the fifth, during dinner, his sisters were saying they had not seen their grandmother for two days, and would pay her an early visit the ensuing morning. "Suppose you accompany me there this evening," said Mr. de Melac.

They readily consented, and Bazile, eager to display his politeness, said, with his father's leave he would join their party. He now thought himself perfectly secure; wanted once more to find an opportunity of addressing the Duke concerning his taking him into his regiment; which he looked upon as almost agreed upon between them, if Mr. de

de Melac would but confent to his wifhes. It was therefore neceffary the fubject fhould be again ftarted in his prefence; and this was the road his Grace ufually took, and where there was the beft chance of meeting him.

His father, though deeply hurt by the want of feeling he had difplayed, was neverthelefs very much pleafed by the vifible alteration for the better in his behaviour; he began to think the Duke's method of punifhment a good one.

Early in the evening Mr. de Melac, his two daughters, and Bazile, fet out for Madame des Ormes. Madame de Franval had got a flight cold, and chofe to ftay at home. At the entrance of the village they were overtaken by the Duke, mounted upon a beautiful Andalufian courfer, and followed only by a groom. Mr. de Melac and his fon remarked they had never feen this handfome horfe before. When the Duke ftopped

to

to pay them his compliments, they expreſſed their admiration of him in the ſtrongeſt terms, Bazile wiſhed he had juſt ſuch another, in hopes this clever ſpeech would lead to his favourite ſubject; but the Duke no longer having either deſire or intention to promote his wiſhes, took no ſort of notice of them, and in reply to Mr. de Melac, ſaid he had not rode the horſe ſince he had been at Dunkirk, owing to a cold he caught upon the road, of which he was now perfectly recovered, and very impatient for his uſual exerciſe. "Is he at all vicious?" ſaid de Melac.

"Not in the ſlighteſt degree; on the contrary as gentle as a lamb, and as playful."

Clemence ſaid ſhe ſhould like to ſee a ſpecimen of his playfulneſs. The Duke, to oblige her, as they were upon the green before Madame des Ormes' houſe, ſaid he ſhould perform ſome military evolutions. He inſtantly did as he was ordered, and paraded round the green to the ſound of his maſter's voice.

De

De Melac ſtood contemplating both rider and horſe in ſilent admiration; while the young ladies were loud in their plaudits; and Bazile was not tardy in complimenting the Duke, who now brought his horſe towards them in a foot pace, and deſired him to pay his obedience to the ladies, which he did, by raiſing his fore feet and letting them fall again very gently. When the Duke, in pulling out his handkerchief, dropped a letter, Mr. de Melac inſtantly picked it up and reſtored it to him.

"I don't believe any body was ever troubled with ſuch a miſerable head as myſelf," ſaid his Grace, "I wrote this letter juſt before I came down ſtairs, and put it in my pocket to give to one of my ſervants for the poſt; it totally eſcaped my memory, and I am afraid it will be now too late."

Mr. de Melac looked at his watch, and ſaid the groom by making haſte might be in time; if the bag was cloſed it would be opened for his Grace. The groom was inſtantly diſpatched, and the Duke told him

him he would wait his return at Madame des Ormes.

De Melac and his Grace were upon too familiar terms to render any compliments neceſſary on either ſide upon this occaſion.

The Duke diſmounted at the little gate, and hung his horſe upon the paling, ſaying he could depend upon him, and would take a walk in the garden, as his ſervant would not be long. Bazile offered to watch the horſe, but he aſſured him there was no neceſſity; he was certain he would not move. They therefore all walked into the houſe, and after aſking the old lady how ſhe did, and chatting with her a few minutes, the Duke and Mr. de Melac, equally fond of being *tète-a-tète*, walked into the garden, and left the young people to amuſe their grandmother. Bazile, not being aſked, dared not follow them, though he longed more than ever to bring about the wiſhed for explanation: he therefore walked into the front court,

court, and began to point out to his ſiſters the various beauties of the *Andaluſian.*

"You are a great judge, no doubt," ſaid Clemence, who had followed him; "and could you ride as well as the Duke I might pay ſome attention to your remarks.

What aſtoniſhing agility he diſplayed.

You have the equeſtrian art to practice, you find, before you think of getting into the cavalry."

"Why, do you ſuppoſe, child," ſaid Bazile, "there is the ſlighteſt difficuly in riding a managed horſe trained as this has been, whom you have only to order about as you would a dog? I will ſoon convince you how eaſy it is to make a charger do as his rider chuſes."

"For heaven's ſake, Bazile, don't be ſilly enough to expoſe your neck through vanity, and run the riſk of offending both the Duke and my father!"

"They are both ſafe, my little Clemence; and I muſt take one round of the green," flinging the horſe's bridle over his neck, and offering

offering to mount; but the beaſt, conſcious, it may be preſumed, Bazile had no right to take ſuch a liberty, refuſed to ſtand ſtill; he coaxed him, patted his neck, and made ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts.

Erneſtine, who had ſeen what he was about from the windows, came out to Clemence; and though ſhe could not help joining in her mirth, adviſed her brother very ſeriouſly to let the horſe alone; but Bazile's honour was in queſtion, and he would not give up the point; therefore began to threaten the horſe into obedience; but upon a peaſant, who was paſſing by, coming to his aſſiſtance, and holding his head, he was able to ſcramble into the ſaddle; then calling out to his ſiſters with an air of triumph, "There," ſaid he, "I look ſomething like a ſoldier; if I had but the Duke's uniform, I ſhould be quite the thing!"

"You would ſtill want his figure," ſaid Clemence, "but pray get down, for I am ſure you won't be able to ſit that gentle creature

creature long." The horſe began to prance while ſhe was ſpeaking; at firſt Bazile was pleaſed; he had got a cane in his hand, which he dignified by the name of his ſword, and began to iſſue his orders to the horſe as he had obſerved the Duke do, and to canter round the green. In a few ſeconds the *Andaluſian* became ungovernable to ſuch a rider; Bazile's ſhoulders were above his head—he dropped his cane—his hat ſoon followed—he was obliged to ſeize the mane to ſave himſelf from falling. His ſiſters, now ſeriouſly alarmed at ſeeing his danger, and unable to afford him any aſſiſtance, ran ſcreaming into the houſe, in order to call the Duke; but as the horſe, no longer under any command, followed the bent of his own inclinations, he turned down a little lane that ran by the ſide of the garden where the Duke and Mr. de Melac were walking: the ſound of a horſe advancing full ſpeed, made his Grace look over the hedge; he was juſt in time to give the word of command, which made the horſe ſtop ſo inſtantaneouſly, and

take

take a kind of turn to the ſpot from whence the voice, he ſo perfectly recognized, proceeded, that poor Bazile found himſelf in the middle of the very hedge his Grace was looking over. The Duke, aſſiſted by Mr. de Melac, ſoon pulled him out, and before his ſiſters had reached the ſpot, he was upon his legs in the garden.

"For heaven's ſake," exclaimed Erneſtine, "how came you here, Bazile?"

The Duke burſt out a laughing—"Indeed, my lovely little friend, he made an odd kind of an *entrée!*" Then, turning to the culprit, who was pale as death, and whoſe hair ſtood erect, ſaid, "I hope you have received no hurt, Mr. Bazile."

He was ſtill too much frightened to ſpeak; and Mr. de Melac having recovered from the momentary terror he felt for his ſafety, aſked him, very ſternly, how he dared take the liberty to touch, much more to mount, that horſe.

 The

The Duke inſtantly interfered in his behalf, ſaying he was convinced Mr. Bazile had no intention to offend; and he was very happy he had eſcaped unhurt: he then got over the hedge and led the horſe, who had ſtood quite ſtill, as if waiting his further orders, round to the front door, and was in reality highly pleaſed with what he had done.

Mr. de Melac and his children joined the Duke, when the groom rode up, as he was once more going to hang his horſe to the gate; and as Bazile's accident had broke off his converſation with Mr. de Melac, (and he was not ſorry to afford him an opportunity of giving his ſon a lecture, which, in his opinion, he deſerved) he immediately took leave; but when he was going to mount, ordered his horſe to fall upon his knees, which the docile creature inſtantly did; his Grace put his leg over, and allowed him to riſe gently with him upon his back, ſaying, "You will find this, Mr. Bazile, a much

more

more convenient method of mounting and dismounting than the one you adopted."

Ermance laughed, and Bazile, who had now recovered his speech, begged pardon for the liberty he had taken, protesting he only meant to walk the horse once round the green."

"You are only, like my Andalusian," said his Grace, smiling, "rather out of training, Mr. Bazile; a little practice may make you an excellent cavalier:" then bowing to de Melac and the young ladies, he set off full gallop.

The last speech hurt Bazile very much; it contained, in his opinion, such a tacit reproach of his want of skill, as made him afraid this misfortune would prevent his Grace from keeping his word respecting his going into the army. His father interrupted his reflections by taking him to task very severely for his late freak.

 Bazile,

Bazile, never more impatient of controul, endeavoured to defend his conduct.

"This is not the firft liberty by many you have taken with that gentleman," faid the highly offended father; "becaufe he honours me with his friendfhip, you think you have a right to do and fay what you pleafe! Don't fancy, Bazile, my late forbearance has proceeded from kindnefs!"

Mr. de Melac's looks were fo much more expreffive than his word, that the confcious Bazile fhrunk from his fcrutinizing eyes, convinced, now, he was perfectly acquainted with his late adventure; fearful of any further explanation, he faid no more.

At dufk they took leave of Madame des Ormes, and returned to Dunkirk; but Bazile, thoroughly humbled, never ventured to mix in the converfation, and fincerely repented he had joined the party. He contrived to fee his dear Berenger for a few mi-

nutes before ſupper, and imparted the fears he began to entertain, and his aſtoniſhment at his father, who in general being ſo fond of moralizing upon the moſt trivial event, had hitherto been ſo accountable ſilent.

"The Duke told him every thing," ſaid the ſagacious Berenger, "and has ſworn him to ſecrecy upon it; but, I dare ſay, though his Grace certainly meant to pay his court to your rigid old dad at your expence, he repreſented every thing in the moſt favourable light; ſo keep up your ſpirits, and remember the old fellow is not immortal!"

"True, my dear friend. Adieu! I dare not ſtay out late;" and thus they parted, as Bazile did not chuſe to mention his recent accident, even to this favourite friend, for fear it ſhould lower him in his opinion.

CHAP. XV.

ON the Tuefday following, Vanval called at Mr. de Melac's, as he frequently did, by his defire, while the family were drinking their coffee after dinner.

As foon as he was feated, he faid, " You don't abfolutely owe this vifit, my good friend, to the liking I have for this delicious beverage (alluding to the coffee) and which you always have in the greateft perfection; for I came this time upon a different errand. There is to be a grand fhew at Ypres (the place of my nativity) next Sunday; the new church is to be dedicated on that day; the bifhop is to perform the ceremony, and there will be a great many fine folks affembled upon this grand occafion.

occasion. My nephew, who resides there, writes me word vast preparations are going forward. I have not been there for some years, so mean to take this opportunity of paying him a visit, and shall take Julien, my eldest nephew, with me. Now, if you and your family can make it convenient to accompany us, we shall feel ourselves highly honoured; I cannot absolutely promise you accommodations in my nephews house; but he has engaged two private apartments among his friends for a dozen of mine, if I bring so many. I know these young ladies will be amused; and I promise you Ypres is worth seeing, and will never appear to more advantage than upon this occasion; so what say you, my dear Sir, to my proposal?

Mr. de Melac had consulted his daughters' looks while Vanval was speaking, and saw they wished to go; and he had but one objection to make to this kind unceremonious offer, and that he did not chuse to acknowledge. He thanked Vanval in the

politeſt terms, but ſaid, much as he wiſhed to gratify his childrens' inclinations, and oblige him, he was not abſolutely ſure whether in this inſtance, it would be in his power; but, with his leave, he would defer giving his final anſwer till the next day.

"Only let it be favourable mind," continued Vanval; "my nephew is *un bon gros flamand*, like myſelf; you will meet with a hearty welcome; but no ceremony: and the more company I take with me, the happier he will be to ſee me;—ſo I won't ſay any more upon the ſubject."

The converſation then turned upon the news of the day; and the ſurgeon, who was an errand goſſip, ſtaid ſo late, he prevented Mr. de Melac from taking his uſual evening walk; he therefore only made the tour of the ramparts and called upon the Duke on his return, who was alone, and very happy to ſee him. He told him Madame des Ormes was very well, as he had looked in upon her *en paſſant*, in hopes of finding him there;

there; ſo, to make himſelf amends for his diſappointment, he ſhould keep him to ſupper. No propoſal could have been more agreeable to de Melac, who ſent word home for his family not to wait for him.

In the courſe of the evening, the Duke ſaid he was going within a few days to make a little excurſion.

De Melao's countenance inſtantly changed, fearful he was going entirely to leave Dunkirk, but endeavoured to conceal his perturbation.

"I hope, Sir, you will not be long abſent?"

"Only a few days," ſaid his Grace, who had remarked the viſible alteration in Mr. de Melac's looks when he mentioned his intentions; was it poſſible, he thought, this worthy man ſhould be ſo much intereſted in what he did, or where he went? and to what elſe could he attribute theſe viſible changes in

his countenance, and theſe ſudden ſtarts of feeling? for he hardly knew by what other name to define de Melac's agitation.

As theſe momentary reflections occaſioned a ſort of pauſe in his diſcourſe, de Melac had recourſe to his handkerchief, turning his head another way to avoid the piercing expreſſive eyes of the Duke, who ſaid, "I am going to Ypres upon a viſit to the Biſhop to meet a few friends, and be preſent at the dedication of a new church."

De Melac, whoſe cheerfulneſs was revived by this unexpected but truly agreeable intelligence, replied, "I have alſo had an invitation to Ypres to be preſent at this grand ceremony, which I am aſſured will be very well worth ſeeing."

"No doubt," ſaid the Duke; I hope you mean to go, and to take your daughters, to whom it will be a greater novelty than to yourſelf."

"I be-

"I believe I ſhall, ſaid Mr. de Melac, who, the moment he learned the Duke's engagement, had determined to accompany the ſurgeon, and mentioned what paſſed between him and Vanval upon the occaſion.

"How do you propoſe going?" ſaid the Duke.

"In my coach, with my own horſes; it is not more than thirty miles, they are very ſtrong, and will do it with eaſe in a day."

"Certainly," ſaid the Duke; and after a moment's reflection, ſaid, "I wiſh you would allow me to arrange the party, as we are all going the ſame way, and to the ſame place."

"Pray do, Sir; I promiſe you befor hand, to conform in every reſpect to your wiſhes."

"Vanval does not keep a carriage; yours is large enough to hold ſix; therefore ſuppoſe you ſent the young people under his and Madame de Franval's care for this journey, and accompany me in my chaiſe alone; I ſhall go poſt, therefore we need not ſet out

ſo early as they will ; and I can ſet you down wherever you take up your quarters. I know mine is a very ſelfiſh propoſal, but if you will agree to it, you will oblige me very much."

" I am not ſo much my own enemy as to ſtart any objections to ſo flattering and ſo agreeable a propoſal, replied de Melac. What day do you mean to leave Dunkirk?".

" I did intend to ſet off on Thurſday, ſaid the Duke, but will make it Friday if that day ſuits you better."

" I beg you would purſue youı original intentions. I ſhall like to have a little time to look about me before the grand fight."

" Very well, then on Thurſday I will dine with you ; you will not be in any fear then either for mine or your lovely Erneſtine's heart ; for I am perfectly acquainted with the reaſons which have hitherto prevented you from inviting me to your houſe, and really commend your prudence, as you may have done both your daughter and me a

very

very eſſential piece of ſervice." This was ſpoke in a half-joking way.

Mr. de Melac coloured, but ſaid, I am very glad you, in ſome reſpects, do me ſo much juſtice; my fears for the happineſs of my daughters have certainly induced me to act as you ſuppoſe; though I hope your Grace will believe me when I aſſure you, I never entertained the ſlighteſt doubts of your honour, but you are young, handſome, and faſcinating; my daughters have eyes, and if a fond father may be credited, no ſmall ſhare of judgment; therefore I think, ſituated as I am, you would have acted as I have done."

"Nay, nay, my good friend, don't look ſerious; upon my honour I approve of your conduct, though not of the appeal you have juſt made to my vanity. Yet, believe me, I ſhould be very ſorry were I to have the ſlighteſt reaſon to ſuppoſe I was ever the occaſion of a moment's uneaſineſs to any lady, much more to one of your daughters. Love,

I am

I am told, is a very ſtrange, a very ungovernable paſſion: as yet I can ſay it has not broke my reſt. However, our plan is ſettled, you accompany me in my carriage, and I dine with you at one; ſo now let's take a trip to the Weſt Indies."

The converſation immediately changed to the various productions of the different iſlands, mode of treating the ſlaves, &c.; and ſoon after eleven Mr. de Melac took his leave; told his family at breakfaſt the next morning when, and how they were to go to Ypres; and expreſſed the pleaſure he felt he had been able to make it convenient to gratify the curioſity of his daughters. He then ſet out for Mr. Vanval's, who was very happy to find he intended to honour his nephew with his company, and very much pleaſed with the Duke's arrangement. Being naturally of a ſaving diſpoſition, and finding this would relieve him from every travelling expence, acknowleged one great reaſon that carried him to Ypres (curioſity apart) was, to allow his nephew,

nephew, Julien, time to take leave of his mother and ſiſters, as he meant very ſpeedily to accompany him to Paris, where he wiſhed him to walk the hoſpitals, as he had done himſelf for a few years before he began to practice for himſelf; his other nephew, Celeſtin, muſt ſupply his place during his abſence. He hoped the ſhew at Ypres would prove worth the jaunt, and as the Duke was to be preſent upon the occaſion, he had but little doubt it would be ſomething magnificent, and would ſerve him to entertain his patients with for a month. Mr. de Melac ſmiled at his volubility, and ſoon took his leave to make the neceſſary preparation for their journey.

CHAP. XVI.

WHEN this expedition was firſt mentioned, Bazile was very much afraid he ſhould not have been included; but Mr. de Melac wiſhed too much to have him under his own eyes to inflict ſuch a puniſhment upon him. The moment he found, therefore, he was to accompany his father and ſiſters, he hurried to his taylors and gave orders for a moſt ſhewy ſuit, which he inſiſted upon having by eight o'clock the next morning, even if the maſter and all his men paſſed the night in getting it ready. As he was a good cuſtomer he was punctually obeyed; and even appeared in this ſmart ſuit by nine, the time they all uſually met at breakfaſt.

Of

Of late Mr. de Melac had taken very little notice of his drefs, but it ftruck him on the prefent occafion, as being fo very prepofterous; he fpoke to him very feverely: "Such gaudy cloaths were even abfurd when a man was dreft, but abfolutely ridiculous to travel in; Vanvals family would certainly form a very mean opinion of his intellects from his appearance: he therefore very ferioufly defired him to change them at prefent, if he chofe to fport them on the Sunday; he, Mr. de Melac, fhould have this confolation, there would be fo many things to admire, that his abfurdity might pafs unnoticed in the crowd."

Bazile dared not make any objections, though he never was more mortified, as he had hoped to dazzle the whole generation of the Vanvals, and infpire them with the moft profound refpect, by his brilliant appearance. He retreated therefore to his own room much diffatisfied, and in lefs than a quarter of an hour returned, dreffed rather more

in character, as his father told him. His ſiſters laughed at the alteration he had made, and conſoled him by prognoſticating he would he would be the moſt ſhewy figure at church.

About ten they ſet off, called for Vanval and his nephew as they paſſed their door, and proceeded to Ypreſs. Mr. de Melac ſpent the intervening time in giving orders to his clerks, who were all men he could depend upon, and making every other preparation for his journey.

About half paſt twelve the Duke was announced. De Melac was in very high ſpirits, and ſeemed more than uſually pleaſed to ſee his favourite young friend, who, though he thought looked more to advantage in regimentals, yet almoſt wiſhed he might never wear them again; but this he kept to himſelf. An elegant little dinner had been prepared for this diſtinguiſhed viſitor; and between two and three they ſet off in a travelling

velling poſt chaiſe, attended by four out-riders.

It was now the latter end of Auguſt, and they wiſhed to reach Ypres before dark; they found, allowing for the various neceſſary delays, they ſhould not have much time to ſpare. The poſtillions were therefore ordered to make the beſt of their way, and eager to obey the command, made ſuch haſte over the ſtones, and ſuch a noiſe with their whip, that the travellers found it impoſſible to converſe with any degree of comfort, till they were without the town, when the purport of their journey naturally became their ſubject.

Mr. de Melac aſked the Duke, if he had ever been preſent at a ceremony of this kind?

"Never, my dear Sir; nor do I think curioſity would have carried me ſo far upon the preſent occaſion; had not I had a much

a much more powerful motive for this untaking."

Mr. de Melac was not naturally curious, ſtill he could not help diſplaying ſome ſymptoms of that ſort upon the preſent occaſion; and, by way of leading to a farther explanation ſaid, "Some love affair, I preſume."

"Why, upon my word, when I firſt mentioned this journey to you, I had great expectations this ſhew would have introduced me to my intended bride; but a letter I received yeſterday from the Biſhop damped all my hopes; except, indeed, the good man, which I rather ſuſpect, means to take me by ſurprize."

"Has your Grace any ſerious thoughts of altering your condition," ſaid de Melac.

"I have been engaged for years, my dear friend, even before I was born! Marriages among people of any rank in France are mere *arrangement de famillè* you know, and generally foreſeen for ſome length of time. Whether it is right or wrong I cannot pretend

to

to ſay, but I am ſeriouſly engaged to the eldeſt daughter of my mother's moſt intimate friend; as yet I have not been allowed to pay my devoirs to the young lady."

"I know theſe ſort of arrangement are very common; nor have I any doubt but the young lady in queſtion is a very proper match for your Grace; ſtill I do not abſolutely approve of ſuch marriages. My children's ſituation in life happily, in my opinion, precludes them from ſuch early engagements; it appears to me the heart ought to be conſulted before two people meet at the altar."

"Your remark is that of a fond father and an excellent man," ſaid the Duke; "ſtill I think the French are, in general, as happy in their married ſtate as many other nations: and more or leſs, in every country, among perſons of diſtinction, marriage is a ſort of *affair de convenance.* My intended bride, I am aſſured, is remarkably handſome; but we all differ in our opinion of female beauty: what I think of infinitely more importance, ſhe is

ſtill

ſtill more remarkable for the ſweetneſs of her temper.

Madame de Mancove is the eldeſt daughter of the Marquis de Neufpont, and is, in the world's opinion, nearly angelic. I have always ſuppoſed theſe animated deſcriptions were merely calculated to raiſe my curioſity, and make me fall in love with an ideal portrait; but I am not of a very romantic turn, nor is my imagination eaſily inflamed.

"Perhaps you may have heard of the family, Sir; for Mr. de Neufpont commanded in the Weſt Indies laſt war—is now a General Officer—and will, in all probability, ſoon be a Marſhal de France, as few men are more eſteemed in his profeſſion."

The Duke looked at his companion, whom he perceived rather confuſed, while he anſwered, "I think I have had the honour of ſeeing the Marquis in my younger days: Did not he marry a Madame de l'Ecluſe?"

"He

"He did, Sir," ſaid the Duke, ſomewhat ſurpriſed the Receiver General of Dunkirk, and a man who had ſpent the beſt part of his life in Guadaloupe, ſhould be acquainted with the Marquis's connections. However, not chuſing to make this remark, he thus continued:—"Madame de Neufpont and my mother have been friends from their childhood; they were educated at the Abbey of Confluns, near Paris; and, I have been informed, always promiſed each other to become related through their children, if they ever had any; therefore I may, with propriety, ſay I was betrothed to Agnes de Moncove before I was born. It would be difficult to give you an idea of the attachment ſubſiſtent between our mothers, though of very different diſpoſitions; indeed, ſo have been their deſtinies. They prevailed upon their reſpective parents to allow them to leave their convent on the ſame day—they were married on the ſame day—at the ſame church—and both by the Archbiſhop of Sens."

As

As the Duke made a paufe, expecting a reply, and received none, he turned his head, and perceived his companion pale as death, indeed hardly able to breathe, leaning againft the fide of the carriage. The Duke's exclamation of regret and furprife roufed him fufficiently to induce him to make an effort to let down the glafs on his fide, really alarmed his Grace caught his hand, which was cold as ice; faying, "What can I do for you?—Shall I ftop the poftillion?—You feem very ill."

De Melac, in a few feconds, was able to fay, in an audible whifper, "I fhall be better in a moment—a little air will revive me—a fort of giddinefs feized me—I have been rather fubject to of late."

"Upon my word you ought to take fomething to remove it," faid the Duke; "a long refidence in the Weft-Indies is very apt to debilitate the frame; and, as I once faid before, I am certain the air of Flanders is too damp for you;—do follow Bertrand's prefcriptions,

prefcriptions, and allow him to vifit you fometimes; I am fure if it is within the reach of his fkill, he will afford you fome relief."

Mr. de Melac having rather recovered himfelf, looked at the Duke, faying, "There are few medical men of whom I have fo high an opinion at this moment as your furgeon; but there are complaints that would baffle even the fkill of Efculapius: I am fometimes tempted to believe, when I allow myfelf to reflect upon the paft events of my life, there is a fort of fatality prefides over human affairs."

"You feem to fpeak feelingly, my dear Sir," faid the Duke; "I had hoped your diforder was not of the nature your fpeech feems to imply; for, as you very juftly obferve, whatever affects the fpirits is not eafily removed; but I am convinced there is great juftice in your laft obfervation: indeed I begin to think we are fellow fufferers from the fame caufe. An extraordinary fatality

fatality prefided at my birth ; ftill I know I ought not to repine ; and ferious reflections (the neceffary refult of a ftrange chain of events, connected with my family hiftory) has very probably kept me out of many fol-lies."

Mr. de Melac's eyes were rivetted upon the Duke while he was fpeaking ; he feemed fearful of lofing a fyllable he uttered, though he forbore making any comments upon what he faid : and their entrance into Bergues St. Vinox gave a different turn to the conver-fation. Their horfes were ready ; they pro-ceeded very fpeedily on their journey. Unwilling to return to the fubject of Mr. de Melac's illnefs. The Duke began to talk of Ypres.

"It is a very large and a very dull town, I have been told," faid de Melac, "Like moft other towns in Auftrian Flan-ders."

"My

"My dear Sir, I can't ſay I am partial to the Low Countries in general; yet my intended father-in-law's principal ſeat is upon theſe frontiers: indeed within four leagues of Ypres, at Queſnoy; and, at his death, it is to belong to me. The Biſhop of Ypres is nearly related to Madame de Neufpont, and ſeems very anxious to have me for a neighbour."

"And you intend to marry Madamoiſelle de Moncove merely from the favourable report you have heard of her beauty and accompliſhments, without allowing yourſelf any time to judge of her diſpoſition yourſelf?"

"Would you think me very much in the wrong, if I were guilty of ſuch precipitancy?" ſaid the Duke, with a ſmile.

"At all events, I ſhould not venture to condemn you."

"That would be very wrong, if you thought me to blame; but if you were acquainted with my mother, you would not wonder at the utmoſt obedience with which I ever did and ever ſhall conform to

her will. I may be partial; but, in my opinion, Madame de St. Pirne has not, at this moment, her equal upon earth; to ſay I love her is too weak an expreſſion compared to my feelings. I am very angry our language does not afford me a ſtronger term to expreſs the more than filial regard ſhe has ever inſpired me with. She has ſet her heart upon this connection, planned almoſt during her own childhood; and, with a view ſolely to promote my felicity, has very often viſited Mademoiſelle de Moncove at the abbey of Senlis, where ſhe has been educated, and ſtill reſides, merely to ſtudy her temper and inclinations. Her report has always been extremely favourable. I ſhall therefore, as far as I am a judge of my own heart, lead the lovely Palmira to the altar with pleaſure, and devote the reſt of my life to promote her's and Madame de St. Pirne's felicity. She muſt be almoſt more than mortal to deprive the latter of the firſt place in my heart. I know ſuch a confeſſion would excite the mirth of many people; but you,

you, my dear Sir, are capable of appreciating and doing juftice to my feelings.

Deprived, before I faw the light, by the moft unheard-of villainy, of a father whofe memory I fhall never ceafe to revere, how many heart-rending fighs of my mother's have I witneffed, before I was able to guefs the caufe of her poignant forrow!—how many times has fhe wept over me, till the love I early felt for her, by inducing me to mingle my tears with her's, has made her put a check to grief almoft too painful for endurance. The firft wifh I ever formed was to make her happy—and to fee her fmile conftituted my greateft felicity. When old enough to feel the irreparable lofs I had fuftained, how often has fhe expreffed her wifhes I might refemble the man whofe death—worfe than death—fhe as conftantly deplored—and whofe virtues were her conftant theme! How far fhe has fucceeded in her endeavours to make me tread in his fteps, fhe beft can tell; and at all

 events,

events, while I live, I will endeavour to convince her of my gratitude for the attempt."

Mr. de Melac had remained with his handkerchief in his hand, and frequently looked out of the window as for air, while he wiped away a tear in ſilence; but as his Grace now made a full ſtop, it became neceſſary for him to ſay ſomething. "With ſuch reaſons for marrying you muſt be happy. How much is the Ducheſs de St. Pirne to be envied!"

"I wiſh in that reſpect my ſentiments coincided with your's, my dear Sir. My mother's ſituation, believe me, has been very far from enviable ſince my birth; fond as ſhe has ever been of me, it was at that epoch ſhe firſt knew ſorrow: yet, with what truly maternal zeal did ſhe ſuperintend my education! ſhe by no means thought it ſufficient to provide me with the beſt maſters in every ſcience; ſhe alſo choſe to ſee that both they and I fulfilled our reſpective duties; and was particularly attentive to prevent my mind

being

being enervated by early adulation—too often the cafe with youth in my fituation. She impofed all thefe duties upon herfelf at a time of life, when ninety-nine out of a hundred of her fex would have found very excellent, nay even juftifiable, reafons for declining, fuch a tafk; and have committed me folely to the care of a governor. Indeed the gentleman fhe felected for what fhe deemed an important poft, proved, as fhe has often faid, a moft able auxiliary. During my youth my grandfather alfo had fome fhare in my education; but, as he would have thought it a crime to contradict me in any refpect, and took every other effectual means to fpoil me, my mother contrived, though without offending him, to counteract his really kind intentions; yet, at the fame time, taught me to love and revere him. The laft three years of her life Madame de St. Pirne has fpent at the Abbaye St. Antoine, much to my regret; but this was a refolution fhe had long formed, and chofe to execute as foon as I no longer required her unre-

unremitting care; and I don't ſuppoſe any thing will ever induce her to quit her preſent retirement, at leaſt for any length of time."

"I almoſt wonder that maternal love your Grace ſo feelingly deſcribes, did not prevent the Ducheſs from thus ſecluding herſelf even from your ſociety: ſhe certainly cannot ſee you ſo often in her preſent retreat, as you both muſt wiſh."

"I frequently tried, but in vain, to diſſuade her from putting her plan into execution; as ſhe is by no means a bigot, though partial to a retired life, and the ſociety a convent affords. Among the nuns, ſhe thinks there muſt be ſome very exalted characters; indeed ſhe has favoured me with ſome anecdotes reſpecting her moſt intimate friends at the abbey, that convince me of the truth of her obſervation. She is not the leaſt confined to the rules of the houſe, and is in every reſpect as much her own miſtreſs as while ſhe reſided with me; yet the idea, that after eight o'clock in the evening I cannot be admitted to ſee her, often damps the

the pleaſure I feel in her company. She was fearful, had ſhe continued to reſide with me, I ſhould have devoted too much of my time to her, and not have ſeen ſo much company as I do at preſent; and ſhe ſaid, in reply to my earneſt remonſtrances upon the ſubject, I was at a time of life to mix in the world, ſelect my own friends, and attend to the ſocial duties my rank and ſituation impoſed; nor would ſhe be at all flattered were I to ſpend a day leſs with my regiment upon her account. On my once ſaying, a week more or leſs was not an object in time of peace, her anſwer was, any deviation from the ſtrict rules of order in thoſe who have it in their power to command obedience, is always noticed by thoſe under their direction. I ſhould be very ſorry to ſee my ſon bear any reſemblance to the preſent race of faſhionable young men; though I would have him aſſociate with thoſe of his own rank, and endeavour by the force of example, to correct their follies. Be always ſtrict, my Adolphus, in the obſervance of your own

duty, as neither the common men nor inferior officers can then be difpleafed at your exacting the fame from them."

Such, my dear Sir, are Madame de St. Pirne's principles; and were fhe a man, I am convinced fhe would act up to her precepts. I conftantly correfpond with her twice a week, and I believe fhe is better acquainted with my heart than I am myfelf. She continues to encourage me; and is kind enough to exprefs her defire that I fhould perfevere in the courfe of life I have commenced; and as her approbation is almoft neceffary to my exiftence, I truft I fhall never deferve her cenfure. When I am at Paris, I vifit her daily at her own hour, and pofitively place the time I fpend in her company among the happieft moments of my life; but I am fuch an enthufiaft in my mother's caufe, I forget I am engroffing all the converfation."

"O! pray proceed," faid de Melac; I could liften to you for hours with increafing pleafure.

pleaſure. I now find I purſued a very wrong method with my ſon; though few people can have taken more pains than I have done to make him a good man; but there is an inſtability in his diſpoſition which has rendered all my labours uſeleſs; he has no energy of mind, no fixed reſolution, no decided character; but, like a weather cock, veers about with every blaſt; and has ſuch an opinion of himſelf, it would be a difficult matter to convince him of his follies. He abhors all ſort of application;—and you are too well acquainted with the fallacy of the hopes I had formed from the termination of his late adventure."

"He is very young, my dear friend. No man's character can be formed at nineteen; does he like the profeſſion you have choſen for him?"

"I cannot pretend to tell your Grace I conſulted his inclinations in that reſpect. He was educated for the mercantile line; I therefore placed him in his preſent ſituation, as the moſt ſuitable to the ſort of knowledge

he early acquired. I know it does not meet his approbation; but his inferiority in life precludes him from the army;—his dispoſition and natural turn for diſſipation, renders him ſtill more unfit for the church; and the law requires more application and attention than he would ever have been inclined to beſtow upon any profeſſion. The line I have placed him in is both lucrative and honourable, and neither requires chicanery, talents, nor profound knowledge: and if I can but preſerve his morals, and prevent his principles from being perverted, he may attain ſome degree of utility as a *financier*, or farmer general."

"I cannot pretend to confute your arguments; your reaſons for having placed your ſon in your own office are unanſwerable: but he ſeems to have a particular predilection for the army; and, as your fortune is large enough not to make his following a very lucrative profeſſion any great object,—why not humour him in that reſpect?"

"I am

"I am convinced he never gave the duties of a ſoldier one ſerious thought; he fancies regimentals would become him, for he is, among his other failings, an intolerable fop: beſides, being in the army would entitle him to wear a ſword, and he thinks he ſhould have but little to do, and be allowed to mix in the firſt ſocieties."

"You give me very little encouragement," ſaid the Duke ſmiling, "to plead in his behalf: but remember, if he finds himſelf deceived in ſome of his expectations, he will not chuſe to complain;—and people are ſometimes moſt puniſhed for forming unreaſonable wiſhes by having them granted. I will not pretend to ſay, I think he would ſhine in the cavalry; but allow me to make uſe of my intereſt to obtain him admittance into the infantry."

"Your Grace is infinitely too obliging; and I feel equally grateful, though I muſt beg leave to decline your kind conſiderate propoſal. His inferiority of birth, as I before obſerved, makes me particularly averſe to his embracing

embracing a profeſſion ſet apart in France for men of family. Beſides, I have very little opinion of his bravery, and know him to be totally deficient in point of ſkill and knowledge: but, were he to equal you in both reſpects, even ſuch talents would not eradicate from the minds of his brother officers the lowneſs of his origin."

"Now don't you allow prejudice to uſurp the place of reaſon, my good Sir? what man of ſenſe will ever reflect upon a man's birth if his education has placed him upon a level, with him as a companion? If you knew what reaſon I have to abhor ſuch illiberal notions, you would not wonder at my warmth. But may I preſume to aſk one queſtion? Remember, it proceeds from a friend, ſtrongly intereſted in your's and your family's welfare, and is not the offspring of idle curioſity—You once told me you had been in the army yourſelf? did——"

"I was, Sir, for near ſeven years," ſaid de Melac, haſtily interrupting the Duke; "and the *lowneſs of my origin* forced me to reſign the

the very diſtinguiſhed poſt I held—not want of courage or ſkill in my profeſſion I am vain enough to flatter myſelf."

"I have done," ſaid the Duke; "yet what you have juſt been ſaying makes me more than ever contemn thoſe narrow-minded illiberal prejudices which have deprived me of a father, and my country of an officer who would have done honour to any ſtation."

Seriouſly hurt to think he had thus again, no doubt, revived ſome very diſagreeable recollection in the mind of Mr. de Melac, the Duke inſtantly changed the converſation. They overtook Mr. de Melac's coach within a mile of Ypres, and the two carriages kept together till they arrived at Mr. Vanval's nephew's, where they all alighted except the Duke, who juſt ſtopped to enquire how the young ladies and Madame de Franval found themſelves after their journey. They had a very agreeable ride, the old ſurgeon ſaid, and, except a little diſpute

pute about drefs among the young folks, they had all agreed extremely well. This was faid in a jocofe way: but Bazile, with a very ferious face, faid they had been all againft him.

"A proof you were in the wrong," faid Mr. de Melac; "which, confidering the fubject of the difpute, does not aftonifh me."

The Duke, after promifing to call upon them the next day, took a very polite leave of the whole party, and drove on to the Bifhop's palace, the moft elegant one of its fize in the Low Countries. The Bifhop received him at the door of his carriage, gave him a moft flattering welcome, and then led him into a faloon, where the reft of his company were affembled.

The party confifted of two other dignitaries of the church and four ladies. To them of courfe his Grace paid the moft attention.

The

The Bifhop advanced towards the eldeft, to whom he thus introduced the new comer.

Your Nephew Elect—my amiable friend —Madame de L'Eclufe—Duke—Abbefs of the Chapter of Bourbourg, and fifter to Madame la Marquife de Neufpont;—this lady's crofs and broad red ribbon had already informed the Duke fhe was a canonefs, and of what chapter. The ufual compliments upon fuch occafions paft between them; thefe over, Madame de L'Eclufe turned to a moft elegant young perfon ftanding next her, equally diftinguifhed by the crofs and broad red ribbon, whom, till the Duke had made that difcovery, ftruck him as being the lady he had been firft invited to meet, fhe fo exactly anfwered the defcription his mother had given him of Palmira de Moncove. The Abbefs, wifhing to pay the Bifhop a compliment, faid,

"I am always proud of following my reverend friend's example; therefore allow me, Sir,

Sir, to introduce you next to your ſiſter elect, Madame de Moncove*."

Ermance de Moncove had been a cannoneſs for a year or more, and had conſtantly reſided with her aunt at Bourbourg ſince ſhe became a member of that ſociety: ſhe was juſt turned of ſixteen, and in every reſpect a regular beauty; but her animated pleaſing countenance was far more faſcinating than her fine features and ſparkling blue eyes, which expreſſed very forcibly the vivacity of a diſpoſition no monaſtic rules could repreſs. Her natural colour was heightened during her introduction to the Duke; upon whom ſhe ſmiled expreſſively, while ſhe paid her compliments with the moſt unaffected gaiety—laughed at his diſappointment, which ſhe aſſured him ſhe had read in his

* Cannoneſses of any age are always ſtyled Madame, even before they have taken their laſt vows; till which period they are allowed to marry—and dreſs in every reſpect, croſs and ribbon excepted, like women of faſhion, when abſent from their chapter-houſes, or abbeys.

coun-

countenance the moment he caught ſight of her croſs, and wiſhed her ſiſter had ſupplied her place. The other females were an elderly lady and her daughter, relations of the Biſhop. The neceſſary forms and ceremonies being over, the Duke took his ſeat near Ermance, and enquiries after abſent friends, anticipations of who would be preſent at the grand ſight on Sunday, filled up the converſation till ſupper; ſoon after which they all ſeparated for the night.

The arrangements entered into by the Ducheſs de St. Pirne and Madame la Marquiſe de Neufpont concerning their children, have already been mentioned; and it had been agreed between theſe ladies to introduce the intended lovers to each other at Ypres Thinking this intended fête would afford them an excellent opportunity of putting their plan into execution, Mr. and Madame de Neufpont and their eldeſt daughter were to have ſpent the autumn at Queſnoy:—Madame de St. Pirne had promiſed to

to be of the party. Being particularly anxious to witneſs the firſt meeting between her ſon and Mademoiſelle de Moncove, yet unwilling to take him by ſurprize, ſhe had informed him of what was in agitation; and the Biſhop had given him a ſimilar hint when he wrote to invite him to the approaching ceremony:—however, the laſt letter his Grace received from his mother informed him they had been obliged to relinquiſh their ſcheme, owing to Madame de Neufpont's not being able to quit Verſailles, where ſhe held a very diſtinguiſhed poſt, as the lady who was to have repreſented her during her abſence, was prevented from officiating by illneſs. Still, till the moment the Duke entered the Biſhop's ſaloon, he could not help flattering himſelf his mother merely meant to occaſion him an agreeable ſurprize; yet he was in ſome reſpect glad his meeting with Palmira was poſtponed; he thought they muſt both have felt very awkward—introduced to each other before ſo many

ſtrangers—

ftrangers—all acquainted with what was expected to be the refult of the interview.

During the courfe of the following morning he called upon Mr. de Melac, who affured him they were exceedingly well off as his friend Vanval and family were trying to outvie each other in politenefs. Had he found an opportunity he defigned to have mentioned his difappointment to Mr. de Melac; but as he faw him in Madame de Franval's and his daughter's prefence, he did not chufe to ftart the fubject; and as the Bifhop expected moft of the nobility in the town to dinner, he was obliged to fhorten his vifit.

Ermance was placed next the Duke during the repaft, and in fhort feemed configned to his care by the Bifhop and her aunt. The utmoft familiarity, therefore, foon prevailed between them. To a very cultivated mind, and every female accomplifhment, Ermance joined the utmoft gaiety; and a fort of infantine want of knowledge of the world,

world, owing to the recluſe life ſhe had hitherto led, highly amuſing to him. She was by no means fond of the uniform routine a convent or chapter-houſe afforded; and ardently wiſhed to mix in the gay ſcenes ſhe had ſometimes heard deſcribed by the elder Cannoneſses at Bourbourg—intreated the Duke would ſoon bring matters to a concluſion with her ſiſter, as the rivetting her chains would break her own. Madame de Neufpont having decided ſhe ſhould reſide with her as ſoon as her ſiſter was married, regretted very much the propoſed arrangement had been broken off, and beſtowed the utmoſt praiſes upon Palmira; whom ſhe was certain would make him very happy, as ſhe was not ſuch a mad-cap as herſelf. The Duke was very much diverted by many of her remarks; and aſked her how long ſhe was to ſtay at Ypres.—" Till the following Monday," ſhe replied; " nor ſhould ſhe have been invited, if the Biſhop had not wanted ſomebody to beg for the poor during the ſervice, of the congregation.

" Many

"Many young ladies would feel themſelves highly flattered by the evident compliment the Biſhop has paid you, *ma petite ſœur*," ſaid the Duke; "but you don't ſeem to enjoy the thoughts of the taſk."

"Far from it, I can aſſure you, *mon frère*; I am frightened to death whenever I think of it. I wiſh you would bring me off; do exert your perſuaſive talents in my behalf— and ſhould your eloquence fail, tell the Biſhop you don't chuſe your ſiſter-in-law ſhould expoſe herſelf in ſuch a croud."

"I am ſure you would not wiſh me to be ſuch an enemy to the poor of Ypres, my dear Ermance; but if you will allow me to accompany you, during the appeal you are requeſted to make to the feelings of the congregation, I ſhall be highly flattered."

"Now, for a brother, this is being very polite, you don't know how much your kind offer has already raiſed my ſpirits: I feel very much inclined to laugh at the grave conductor who was allotted me—no leſs a man than the Biſhop's head Chaplain, who, having

once

once been a mendicant friar, I preſume his Lordſhip thought could give me ſome very uſeful inſtructions upon the occaſion; yet, don't you think this method of begging for the poor is, in ſome reſpects, forcing people to be charitable often contrary to their inclinations?"

"Every one is at liberty to do as he likes, you know, Madame—a *patar** can hurt no one: you are merely requeſted to make uſe of intreaties and ſmiles in behalf of the poor; and who will be able to withſtand ſo fair a pleader? As there will be a great croud aſſembled, the collection will moſt likely be large; and if properly applied, will undoubtedly anſwer the beneficent intentions of the donors."

"You have almoſt reconciled me to the undertaking," ſaid Ermance; "accept my thanks for the preſent; I will intreat Palmira to renew them ſome time hence in my name; for I am ſure ſhe will conſider your

* The ſixth part of a halfpenny.

kind

kind offer as an obligation conferred upon herſelf; but as my aunt is infinitely more *en fait* of making compliments than I am, or I am afraid ever ſhall be, I will go and inform her of your kind intentions, that you may have time to arrange a few ſpeeches expreſſive of your gratitude againſt ſhe next ſees you."

When left to himſelf, the Duke ſighed, he hardly knew why, and breathed a ſecret wiſh that Palmira had rather more reſemblance to Ermance in point of vivacity than beauty.

The following day, Saturday, was ſpent at the ſeat of a neighbouring Nobleman; and the evening concluded with a ball, by the particular deſire of Madame de l'Ecluſe. The Duke danced with Ermance; nor did they change partners, at her requeſt alſo, though contrary to the eſtabliſhed rule of the country. She had brought Ermance out in ſome reſpects without her mother's conſent; therefore was particularly deſirous to prevent

 her

her forming any acquaintance likely to militate with the views her family might entertain for her future eſtabliſhment in life. While under the eyes and immediate care of her ſiſter's huſband, (for as ſuch ſhe already looked upon the Duke) there could be nothing of that ſort to fear. Ermance laughed at her precautions; yet felt perfectly ſatisfied with her judicious arrangement: ſhe was fonder of dancing than her partner; yet to oblige her they ſtaid late, and returned to Ypres *tete-a-tete* in his Grace's poſt-chaiſe.

After they had exchanged their opinions upon the ball, and the company they had met, each of them felt rather at a loſs what to ſay. This was the firſt time Ermance had ever emerged from the ſolitude of a convent or chapter-houſe. From the time ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe had been an inhabitant of the abbey of Sentis, till ſhe removed to Bourbourg; and ſhe began to feel ſhe ſhould return thither with regret. Her ſiſter's marriage was to liberate her from this ſort of monaſtic

monaſtic confinement; yet even that idea no longer preſented itſelf to her in the pleaſing manner it formerly had done:—how happy, ſhe thought, Palmira would be with ſo amiable a man!—A gentle ſigh eſcaped her, and ſhe felt a ſort of depreſſion of ſpirits ſhe was at a loſs to account for. When ſhe had intreated the Duke to haſten his marriage, he had begged her to make uſe of her influence with her ſiſter to ſhorten his ſtate of probation. This ſhe had readily promiſed the firſt evening they met; and ſhe intended to keep her word; therefore, in two months more, thought ſhe, I ſhall very probably ſee Palmira ſitting as I am now—but not by the ſide of her brother-in-law—"The Ducheſs de Civrac!" ſhe was nearly repeating aloud—"What a pretty name!—I wonder who will fall to my lot!" This reflection made her very unconſciouſly ſigh louder than before, which rouſed the Duke from a ſort of reverie; while ſhe ſaid, "Bleſs me! I do believe I am going to ſleep!"—"With ſo ſtupid a companion," ſaid the Duke, affecting to

laugh, "it would hardly be wonderful, my dear ſiſter—I really believe the warmth of the weather deprives me of the little ſtock of gallantry I poſſeſs." Each now tried to exert themſelves; neither were ſorry when they reached home—they immediately took leave for the night. As ſoon as the Duke was alone, his thoughts reverted to Ermance, wiſhed he had been firſt introduced to Palmira: ſhe might, and he had been led to believe was, as handſome as Ermance; but if ſhe did not poſſeſs an equal ſhare of vivacity, her countenance could not be ſo animated; Palmira was taller, Madame de l'Ecluſe had told him; but Ermance had not done growing, and was far from ſhort of her age. There was certainly a great reſemblance between her and Ermence de Melac in point of diſpoſition: the latter had always been one of his favourites. Such were his reflections before he went to ſleep, and he found it rather difficult to forget himſelf; Ermance preſented herſelf to him under ſo many different aſpects; ſhe became the ſubject

ſubject of his ſleeping as well as waking reveries: yet he was convinced he was only intereſted in her future welfare; in ſhort, felt the ſame ſort of regard for her he did for Ermence; and was determined to do all in his power to promote her happineſs. As ſhe ſeemed very much attached to Palmira, he thought it would be a pity to ſeparate them; at leaſt till Ermance married: therefore, if Madame de Neufpont was of his way of thinking, ſhe ſhould live with them— ſo gay a companion would enliven them both. After a very reſtleſs night he roſe early, and thought he would ſtep and aſk Mr. de Melac how he did before breakfaſt; when, within a few paces of the door, he was met by Bazile, of whom he enquired after his father and ſiſters. Mr. de Melac and the ſurgeon were gone to take a walk, he ſaid, and his ſiſters were ſo lazy, they were not yet come down ſtairs. The Duke therefore wiſhed him a good morning; and having intreated he would give his compliments to his father aud the young ladies,

was

was turning from him; but is was no ſuch eaſy matter to get rid of Bazile; he kept cloſe to his ſide; and though he had moſt of the converſation to himſelf, did not chuſe to take the hint.

"Did your Grace ever inhabit ſo dull a town as Ypres? Our hoſt and his family are true Flamands—ſome of them poſitively can't ſpeak French!—Did you ever hear of ſuch ſtupid beings?"

"Do you ſpeak Flemiſh, Mr. de Melac?" ſaid the Duke.

Oh heavens! no: why 'tis a mere barbarous jargon exploded in all polite ſocieties."

"It is the language of the country, Sir," ſaid the Duke; "and I can't conceive the inhabitants of Auſtrian Flanders and Brabant deſerve to be ridiculed for not being acquainted with any other, more than an Engliſhman, Spaniard, or Italian, for ſpeaking their reſpective dialects."

Bazile

Bazile was accuſtomed to ſhrink before the Duke's penetrating eyes. The ſenſation this ſpeech gave riſe to, was therefore nothing new; and it totally failed of the deſired end, as he continued to vent his ſpleen againſt the Vanvals:—"They were as fond of tea as the Engliſh, but did not know near ſo well how to make it; and their coffee was the moſt intolerable mixture ever ſet before decent people; they dilute it with water till it has neither colour nor taſte; in ſhort, they are as unacquainted with French manners and cuſtoms as if they lived in Ruſſia;—and as for dreſs, you never ſaw ſuch figures as they make of themſelves."

The Duke felt very much tempted to tell him he was very ungrateful to people who, by his father's account, were doing all in their power to make them welcome, but thought it was not worth his while to endeavour to correct him, therefore only ſhewed his diſapprobation of his remarks by not making any anſwer, and walked on very faſt till he reached

reached the palace gates, where he once more wished him a very good morning. Bazile chose to stop till the porter came to the gate, in hopes the Duke would ask him in to see the palace, which he had heard very much praised by the Vanvals, but was disappointed in his expectations, though he knew his father had been even entreated, to visit him during his stay at the Bishop's; but Mr. de Melac, ever fearful of intruding, had not chose to take advantage of the Invitation.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.